

1996 Reviewed: Triumphs but a widening gap between haves, have-nots

By Cheryl Devall

NINETEEN ninety-six is the year in which many of us, for the first time, routinely penciled (or punched) in lines for e-mail next to the names, street addresses and phone numbers in our indispensable paper or electronic notebooks.

It is a year in which those of us who are married earned, according to one poll, 87 percent of what white married couples earned, compared to 79 percent seven short years ago (1989).

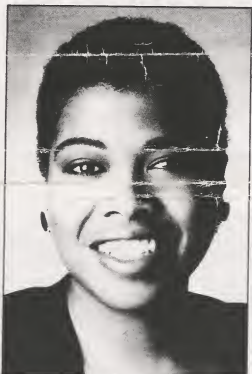
It was a year in which those of us who are not married were having fewer children and taking out first mortgages.

Among African-Americans, the poverty rate fell below 30 percent for the first time since the U.S. Census Bureau began keeping race-based poverty statistics in 1959.

Even the NAACP managed to retire its \$3.5-million debt.

AND ACCORDING to Associated Press and *New York Times* reports, the proportion of young adult black high school graduates is, for the first time, on a par with

Continued on back page



In 1996 alumni started new ventures, used new mediums to communicate, won Pulitzers and wrote best-selling books. They included Valerie Wilson Wesley, '82, who wrote her third novel. **page 3.**

New J-school dean

Tom Goldstein, '69 graduate
and former Columbia professor

NEW YORK – Tom Goldstein is the new dean of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, university President George Rupp announced last month.

Goldstein is a 1969 J-school graduate and Law School graduate. He was a professor at the school during the '70s and '80s.

Goldstein returns to Morningside Heights from the West Coast. There he was
Continued on next page

Say it ain't so?

J-school makes police blotter

Early last December there was this news flash: A ring of Columbia University students were arrested for theft, manufacture of phony money. Someone who heard TV reports in the Midwest emphasized that the crimes occurred at the J-school.

Say it ain't so, I wired a colleague.

"It ain't so!," fired back professor E.R. Shipp.

"The counterfeiting was done in the university print shop that's in the basement of the J-School building.

"But the culprits were all undergraduates, though even that is a bit confusing as their ages were over 22 and that's a bit odd for Columbia.

"Perhaps they were in the School of General Studies, which takes in adults who want to earn their bachelor's degrees."

Working every angle

Industrious N.J. chapter awardee

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – Michael Cottman of *Newsday* was honored as Journalist of the Year at the Garden State Association of Black Journalists awards gala last month.

Cottman was praised for coffee table-style book chronicling the fall 1995 Million Man March on Washington, D.C. He is also about to publish *Spirit Dive*, a book on scuba diving.

Most of all colleagues praised Cottman's tenacious newspaper reporting skills.

"Cottman can find the angles in a glass of water," said newsmen Clem Richardson, "and he will work all of them."

Jackie Jones, an editor in Milwaukee, said about a decade ago a friend of hers who worked at a paper in upstate New York called to say she heard that Cottman was (Jackie's) best friend. Jackie Jones confronted Cottman, whom she hardly knew at the time.

He told her, "If being your best friend was going to help me get the (Tawana Brawley) story, I was going to be your best friend *all the way back to kindergarten!*"

New J-school dean

Continued from front page

dean of the graduate school of journalism and professor at the University of California at Berkeley. He takes over leadership of Columbia J-school in July.

Goldstein succeeds Dean Joan Konner. She "revitalized the School during her 8 1/2 years of exemplary service," said Rupp, "for which we are deeply grateful."

Konner stewarded a multi-million rebuilding and modernization program. More importantly, wrote *The New York Times* last month, Konner's main legacy probably will be what she *did not* change: Columbia remaining a graduate program devoted to training reporters, editors and broadcasters. This emphasis, wrote *The Times*, "puts Columbia almost alone among journalism schools at other campuses. Over the years the teaching of journalism, of gathering and interpreting the facts, has been subsumed under big undergraduate programs called 'mass communications skills,' and merged with programs teaching the language of persuasion: public relations and advertising."

There was a suggestion in the late 1980s to merge the J-school with Columbia's graduate schools of Architecture and Fine Arts. The idea was roundly denounced by alumni. The J-school stayed true to its unique mission.

Goldstein was a reporter and columnist with *The New York Times*, *New York Newsday* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

He is author of three books, including *The News at Any Cost*, and the editor of *Killing the Messenger: 100 Years of Press Criticism*.

Budget Update

Balance before July 1996 issue	\$ 97
Revenues, June 15 to Dec. 15, 1996	428
Subtotal	525
Expenses: printing, postage, July to Dec. 1996	565
Balance before Jan. 1997 issue	\$ -40

One- or two-year new and renewal subscriptions received: 8

The August '96 issue was our final bulk-rate mailing in New Jersey. September, October, November and December issues were mailed first class (.32 a piece instead of .26 by Bulk Rate). Bulk Rate mailings resume this month. The startup required \$85 one-time charge for the permit in Crown Point, Ind. and the annual \$85 fee, which will be charged to the next budget update.

OTHER CHANGES:

The September issue was four pages in the 8.5- by 14-inch format. With a revived subscription and revenue base we will do four pages instead of two to give readers more news. . . We normally print 300 issues a month. The November issue was cut back to 200 to cut costs. December returned to the 300-issue run.

Black Alumni Network Newsletter

Wayne J. Dawkins
editor

Betty Winston Baye,
Angela Chatman,
Cheryl Devall, E.R. Shipp
contributing editors

Published monthly (ISSN 1040-7758)

The City Sun warmed New York for 12 years

Very late in 1996 Andrew W. Cooper stopped publishing the weekly *City Sun* newspaper in Brooklyn, N.Y. The IRS claimed his newspaper owed at least high six figures in taxes, the publisher explained. Cooper is retirement age. He told me he does not want to be destitute. Cooper walked away from his enterprise.

With closing I don't see failure. I say "Job well done," for 12 years as a lively, even pugnacious news source.

Andy Cooper is a curmudgeon. He's lionhearted and will roar and defend ideas he believes in. He is not hesitant about afflicting the comfortable.

Colleagues have told me over the years he is a difficult man to deal with. I agree. I worked for him.

Nine years ago he created one of the worst nights of my life. I introduced him to a huge crowd then presented him with the 1987 NABJ Journalist of the Year Award. On acceptance he told off the crowd. He said Loose Ends, the "variety act" that sang before his presentation, cheapened the award. Folks were bent out of shape. I understood where Andy was coming from.

Before *The City Sun* there was Trans Urban News Service, 1977-84. My first news experience out of college was volunteering then working for the fledgling operation on Joralemon Street.

I'm an admirer of Andy's enterprise and determination. TNS grew from four of us in two small rooms with a desk, typewriter and telephone to a writer's workshop, training at least two dozen aspiring journalists in 1982. I was an instructor then. Two years later Cooper launched his tabloid. It focused on city politics, neighborhood news and culture. By then, I left New York and was working for my second newspaper. I read *The City Sun* from afar and told people proudly that I learned so much working for Cooper.

Now, was the universe giving me a sign on a December Friday or was it just deja vu? While driving to work my mind drifted to a mocking line from a new co-worker. A bunch of us were debating an ethical issue and he dismissed the discussion as a "J-school exercise."

In the car I thought of Andy and how he once loathed Columbia J-school graduates. Nevertheless, he recommended me enthusiastically and unequivocally when I applied to the school in 1979. Months after I was in, an admissions official told me Andy's letter made the difference in choosing me. My college journalism professor knew me longer - he'd seen four years' worth of classwork and extracurricular participation - but he offered a tepid recommendation. I earned good grades and was an editor of the college paper, the professor acknowledged, but his letter lacked passion.

Andy's letter burst with passion. It made you imagine the striking up of a marching band, flag waving on Main Street and Fourth of July fireworks. Andy's offered me as an idealistic, determined young man who would contribute to society. Now, would this uni-versity give me tools to be a great contributor? Andy's recommendation boosted my confidence. It also reminds me constantly how much I must give to this craft I love.

Hours later from this daydream, I'm editing community briefs. There were two paragraphs on new children's books at the Lake County, Ind. Library. One of the four offerings was by that former school official who told me about the difference Andy's letter made.

That person left Columbia long ago. I haven't thought of him in years. Why did he and AWC cross my mind on the same day? *The City Sun* set after a dozen years. It offered a lot of light where there would have been darkness. Job well done.

WAYNE DAWKINS Commentary

New J-school dean

Continued from front page

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1996 Reviewed

Continued from front page

whites.

We were in a better position than ever to take care of our own, and many of us concentrated on doing that, choosing good schools for our children, good books for our nieces and nephews.

But as many of us became more accomplished and more comfortable, this year also brought signs of a wider-than-ever gap: Of awareness, compassion and action, between American haves and have-nots.

Race, urban issues and poverty received little attention during a too-long Presidential election campaign, save for a brief parry during the vice-presidential debate and the Clinton administration's scarily correct calculation that middle-class voters of all races would accept with minimal protest a drastic welfare reform.

THIS WAS the year in which many things once unthinkable became acceptable.

There was little citizen outcry in the United States as the federal government waffled in its response to the massive exodus between Zaire and Rwanda – a movement of Africans that may presage in stability throughout the center of the continent.

In South Africa, the euphoria of democratic rule has worn away during the day-to-day struggle toward legal and economic justice, a struggle that's received little attention in the United States.

Closer to home, new assaults on affirmative action, such as the court-challenged passage of California's Proposition 209, were perhaps helped along by a record low voter turnout in many areas.

CIVIL UNREST including two episodes following the year's sixth police shooting of a black motorist in St. Petersburg, Fla. this autumn are becoming part of the status quo, to be tsk-tsked about and, somehow, accepted.

Some of our worst conspiratorial impulses were aroused when investigative reporters from the San Jose *Mercury News* suggested a long-suspected link between the CIA and the introduction of crack cocaine into African-American communities – with an assist from Nicaraguan Contras.

Despite the determination of other news organizations to either contradict or ignore the

Mercury News report, it's had lasting currency in communities, including South Central L.A., where CIA Director John Deutch failed to convince an angry and skeptical audience in an unprecedented public meeting that the feds' hands were clean.

SYMBOLS OF blatant racial disharmony – among them the burning of churches in the South and the audiotaped ethnic dissing within Texaco's executive ranks – aroused some response in the form of volunteer time, donations and boycotts.

But too seldom did African-Americans put their money where their mouths were.

This is the year in which 15 black men who did just that, pooling their resources to produce Spike Lee's *Get On the Bus*, ended up backing a theatrical flop that disappeared from many theaters after a slow first weekend.

Although black people say that's the kind of movie we want to support, Lee's thought-provoking homage to the Million Man March never surfaced among the box office top ten, as did flashy, violent films like *Set It Off*.

The writer, a 1982 Columbia Journalism graduate is a Miami-based correspondent for National Public Radio.

Jobline Continued

resume, cover letter, writing samples and references to South End Press, 116 St. Botolph St., Boston, Mass. 02115. . . . Applications are available for the National Association of Black Journalists **Scholarship**. Write to NABJ, 3100 Toliaferro Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, Md. 20742. . . . Applications are now available for 1997 Radio and Television News Directors Foundations **scholarships**, **fellowships** and **news management internships** for minority journalism students along with the **Capitol Hill News internships**. RTNDF offers eleven \$1,000 scholarships, one \$2,000 scholarship and one \$5,000 scholarship. **Deadline** for complete applications is **March 1, 1997**. A limited number of copies were mailed to BAN. Call or write to request one. Or contact RTNDF, c/o Gwendolyn Lyda, 1000 Connecticut Ave. NW, suite 615, Washington, D.C. 20036. . . . INDIANA UNIVERSITY School of Journalism is accepting applications for its **Knight Fellows** program, an effort to produce multimedia teacher-scholars prepared to train the next generation of journalists. It is a Ph.D program for those interested in teaching. **The deadline is Jan. 15, 1997**. Obtain applications by writing the Director of Graduate Studies, School of Journalism, Indiana University, Bloomington.

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This time, NABJ meets in Arizona

The National Association of Black Journalists held its winter board meeting in Phoenix, four days after the MLK Jr. federal holiday. This was special because NABJ canceled a scheduled first meeting in Arizona a decade ago to protest the governor's decision to not recognize King Day.

This year host Region 9 director Norman Parish was homeless, journalistically speaking. He was let go when evening *Phoenix Gazette* folded. He landed on his feet at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. His wife is from that city. Parrish starts this month.

Meanwhile, the NABJ board met with news executives of the *Arizona Republic* (owner of the late *Gazette*) during the Phoenix board meeting to discuss the disproportionate number of African-American journalists among the 60 laid off in the *Gazette* newsroom. Of four black men there, two were cut and two in management were demoted. Media watcher Richard Prince reported that many members e-mailed their concerns about the cuts.

Unity 'charge' to boost charities

The Unity VISA card program announced that it generated \$35,000 for charities in its first year.

The United Negro College Fund received \$12,500; Unity Foundation \$10,000; Childrens Defense Fund \$5,000; NAACP Legal Defense Fund \$3,000; Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, \$2,500, National Urban League \$1,500 and \$1,000 for the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

One percent of consumer credit card purchases are donated to these charities.

For information write to P.O. Box 9201, Old Bethpage, NY 11804 or call (800) 94-UNITY.

Quality over quantity Newspapers hiring higher percentage of J-grads

COLUMBUS, OHIO - Daily newspapers hired fewer college graduates to fill newsroom positions in 1995 than five years earlier, while hiring a higher percentage of those graduates from university journalism and mass communication programs.

In 1995, 86 percent of the daily newspaper entry-level hires just out of college had journalism and mass communication degrees. The figure was 75 percent in 1990.

The finding is based on a survey of daily newspaper editors conducted at The Ohio State University. It was released last December.

The finding is consistent with data for TV newsroom hiring released in 1996 by Ohio State researchers and with other data on journalism hiring showing the increasing dependence of news organizations on journalism and mass communication programs to meet their personnel needs.

In 1995, daily newspapers hired an estimated 8,280 newsroom staff members, either as added staff or replacements, said the Ohio State study.

This is a decline of 660 from the 8,940 hired in 1990. In 1985, daily newspapers hired 14,140 newsroom employees.

Dailies hired 21 percent of their newsroom staff directly from college in 1995, compared with a statistically comparable 22 percent in 1990.

The figure is a dramatic drop from the early 1970s, when half of all hires in daily newsrooms were directly out of college.

The bulk of daily newsroom hires currently come from other newspapers, reflecting the shrinking daily newspaper job market.

The percentage of college hires who had journalism or mass communication degrees in 1995 was lower than the comparable figure in TV newsrooms.

In 1995, an estimated 93 percent of the entry-level college hires had journalism and mass communication degrees. That figure had

Continued on back page

English or Ebonics?

The issue is teaching children well

A slow news day in the Bay Area, deadpanned Oakland resident Evelyn C. White, resulted in the Ebonics story. Like a winter storm, Ebonics gained momentum. It pounded its way into the national spotlight. It was big enough to be lampooned on late night TV talk shows and poked fun of on talk radio.

It's no joke in other quarters. The many layers of the African-American community debated whether it was right to teach black dialect from the street in the classroom.

Or, is such a characterization precise? The Ebonics story stirred a lot of emotion in late

WAYNE

December through January but is it widely known what it is and who is really pushing it? What was known was too many African-American children in the Oakland, Calif. school district were performing poorly in school. The Ebonics concept was reported in much of the media as a way of communicating in the language of the street to help children understand their work and help teachers understand so they can teach the skills.

DAWKINS Commentary

Jesse Jackson, Maya Angelou, the NAACP and others weighed in: Black children must know standard English in order to compete for jobs and seats in college. The Clinton administration denounced Ebonics as if it were being proposed as a second language, like bilingual education for Latino and Asian immigrants.

While the adults fought, black children in Oakland (and other places) were let down. Adults were not trying hard enough to teach standard English to children.

Actually, what is taught is "American." We sound nothing like the British.

Many of us professionals who are successful in our fields are "bilingual." We watch our language in the office or boardroom.

When we get with our "homies" and "sistas" we bend, distort or improvise our English with the lyricism of Charlie Parker or the irreverence of Thelouious Monk.

By mid-January, a month after the Ebonics story became a national debate, the Oakland School board moderated its proposal. Many critics like Jackson tried to be more receptive.

What remains is we cannot let our children fail. They can master standard American English.

It is not a foreign language, it is *our* language. It isn't "white people's language."

This time a decade ago Carl Rowan initiated "Project Excellence" because too many African-American children were being pressured by peers not to do well in school because such behavior was deemed "white."

"It is lunacy," said Rowan in 1987 "to assume that when you use the language of Martin Luther King, Whitney Young and Mary McLeod Bethune you're using 'Whitey's language.' White people don't own the English language and young blacks ought to understand that." (And if you don't mind Mr. Rowan, I'll include Malcolm X to your list. When he spoke he was perfectly clear).

Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, bless him, urged at least 1,000 black journalists last August to spread this message: Adults, click off the TV remotes. Make time to sit together at the dinner or breakfast table. Talk to your kids. Just as important, listen to your kids.

The "Children of the Dream," black baby boomers excelling in numerous fields, had nurturing adults, parents, neighbors, even

strangers, who corrected our grammar and diction and pushed us to be the best we can be.

We owe the same to our children.

Twofer Book Sale

Save 50%, good thru Feb. 15

Goodnight Sweetheart, Goodnight: The Story of the Spaniels, Richard G. Carter (reg. \$12). Read it before seeing the legends on *Record Row: Cradle of Rhythm and Blues* (PBS Feb. 20)

Black Journalists: The NABJ Story, Wayne Dawkins (reg. \$12.95). Last copies of the first edition.

Both books: \$12

Add \$2 for shipping; Indiana residents also add 5% sales tax.

August Press, 8590 Polo Club Drive, Merrillville, IN 46410-8841

Jobline

SAN FRANCISCO State University Journalism Department seeks a **full-time** tenure track **professor** with a specialty in in-depth reporting. Candidate must also have ability to teach other skills and survey course and advise student publications. Required: at least 10 years professional experience, some college-level teaching. **Deadline is Feb. 14.** Send cover

letter, curriculum vitae, and sample syllabus of a reporting class you have taught or would like to teach and three letters of recommendation to Professor Erna Smith, San Francisco State University, Journalism Department, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132. e-mail: ersmith@sfsu.edu . . . *The News & Observer*, a 150,000-daily and 210,000-Sunday, 1996 Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper is seeking talented professionals for several positions:

State Government Editor - Must be a seasoned veteran with strong reporting and editing background, knowledge of North Carolina government and politics is helpful, more editing experience the better. Lead a team of reporters who know what they are doing and frequently break state stories; **Radio/TV/Film Reporter** - This is not a critic's job. We're looking for a veteran reporter who can write solid personality pieces, explain why customers are charged high cable TV and dish rates and break features news onto the front page; **Graphics Artist** - We have two spots and we're looking for two good people. We'd like to have a veteran and we'll take someone with creative samples and less than three years experience; **Assigning Editor** - Specific duties are yet to be decided, but maybe you can help us. We'd like to have an experienced editor who has worked with talented reporters to create compelling daily, Sunday and project journalism. Or, if you're a reporter thinking about editing, do you have a varied reporting

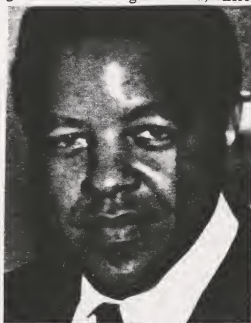
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People

Reginald Stuart, '71, joins *Emerge* magazine as a contributing editor, from the Knight-Ridder Washington bureau, where he



was an editor . . . **Betty Winston Baye**, '80, Louisville *Courier-Journal* columnist, gave the Martin Luther King day address last month to the Kentucky Legislature in Frankfort. **Janice L. Greene**, '82, is finishing graduate studies in Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. She said her concentration is urban and social policy. She is interested in editorial writing. **Norman Akili Buchanan**, '80, was story editor for "Record Row: Cradle of Rhythm and Blues," a PBS documentary airing this month. It is largely the story of Vee Jay and Chess Records that produced dozens of soulful hits in the '50s, '60s and '70s.

background, preferably including explanatory, Sunday and project work if you want to move into editing; **Legislative Reporter** - An important, high-profile beat for the N&O needs someone with a proven track record of high quality reporting, including explanatory, Sunday and project journalism; **Graphics Intern** - In college and looking for a graphics summer internship for 1997? Send your resume, clips and samples immediately.

All inquiries should include a resume, 5 to 7 clips of your best recent work and a cover letter explaining why you are interested in the N&O

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Advertisers:

The deadline to reserve space is Feb. 10.
• Eighth page \$75 (two insertions, \$125);
• quarter page \$125 (two insertions \$200).

Jobline

Continued

and what you can bring to the newspaper. Send everything to:

William W. Sutton Jr., Assistant Managing Editor, The News & Observer, 215 S. McDowell St., Raleigh, NC 27605-1281. Or call 919-836-5911 (fax), 919-829-4530 (work) . . . DePaul University seek candidates for these

full-time faculty positions: Corporate Communication/Communication and Technology. Tenure track, assistant professor to teach undergraduate and graduate courses.

Possible courses: Computer mediated communication and technological issues in the workplace; Corporate Communication /Multicultural Communication. Possible courses: Organization communication, business and professional communication, multicultural communication in the workplace, cross-cultural communication; Radio/Video production: Supervise campus radio station and teach undergraduate courses. **Deadline is Feb.**

15. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, copies of teaching evaluations, sample syllabi, official transcripts and writing samples to: Donald R. Martin, Search Committee Chairman, Communication Department, DePaul University, 2320 N. Kenmore Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-3298. . . The University of New Mexico seeks applications for **Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences**. Complete applications (curriculum vitae, letter of application, three references) must be received by **Feb. 14.** Send to Nasir Ahmed, Interim Associate Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, Arts and Sciences Search Committee, Scholes Hall 227A, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.

Hiring journalism graduates

Continued from front page

been a statistically comparable 91 percent five years earlier.

Researchers at Ohio State conducted the survey of daily newspaper editors in the first half of 1996. Editors were asked to report on hiring in the calendar year 1995.

Seven hundred thirty five editors responded to the survey, representing 48 percent of the 1,539 newspapers listed in the 1995 *Editor & Publisher International Yearbook*.

The 1995 newspaper hiring survey found that 62 percent of the editors believed the "ideal" applicant for an entry-level job in their newsroom would have majored in journalism/mass communication while in college. Thirty two percent of the editors said major didn't matter.

Comparable figures for TV news directors surveyed in 1996 were 46 percent listing journalism as the ideal major and 33 percent saying major didn't matter.

Newspaper editors for the most part report that students with journalism degrees are better prepared for newsroom jobs than students with other degrees. Of the editors surveyed, 72 percent reported that journalism/mass communication graduates were better prepared. Seven percent said they were less well prepared.

Among TV news directors, 67 percent said graduates were better prepared, 8 percent said they were less well prepared.

"These two surveys confirm that journalism and mass communication programs at the nation's universities are highly regarded by editors and news directors," said Lee B. Becker, professor of journalism at Ohio State and co-director of the survey.

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Regional conference roundup

"Regional Renewal: Collective participation and commitment" is the theme of the **Region 2** (N.Y., N.J., Pa.) conference. It is Friday to Sunday **April 4-6** at the Hillside Inn in East Stroudsburg, Pa.

Activities include a plenary session on chapter empowerment and a "Meet the (NABJ) candidates" forum.



All-inclusive member rates (registration, accommodations, meals) are \$230 double occupancy (two nights) and \$190 (one night). Single, family and daily rates also available.

Send registrations and payments to the NABJ Region 2 Conference, c/o Meta J. Mereday, 88 Prospect St., Roosevelt, NY 11575. Or call (516)867-6992.

"Pathways to Excellence" is the theme of the **Region 6** (Ind., Ohio, Ky.) conference. It is Thursday to Sunday **April 24-27**. NABJ-Cincinnati is the host. It is at the Drawbridge Estate in Fort Mitchell, Ky.

Pre-registration is \$75 before April 1, \$100 on site. Hotel room rate is \$72 per night single or double (1-800-3549793).

Make checks payable to NABJ/Cincinnati c/o NABJ Region 6, P.O. Box 141296, Cincinnati, OH 45250-1296.

Questions?: e-mail nabjcinti@aol.com, or call Leisa Richardson (513) 352-5011.

Staff changes at Kaiser Foundation

MENLO PARK, Calif. Matt James was named senior vice president for communications and media programs for the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

He joined the foundation staff in 1991. In addition Tina Hoff was promoted to director of media relations, the foundation announced. The non-profit independent national health care philanthropy said it is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

Struggle for soul of the NABJ Journal

About two dozen members of the National Association of Black Journalists know about the in-house struggle because they are personally involved.

Many hundreds are probably unaware. Behind the scenes, there has been a pitched battle for the soul of the *NABJ Journal*.

"Someone please explain to me how the *NABJ Journal* became a political football?" asked a contributor to the bimonthly that is written and edited online and printed as a magazine.

The fight is over who has authority over content: the NABJ board, or at least some of its representatives, or the non-board members who produce it.

All heck broke loose last month. A board member asked (some believe demanded) that an item be pulled that was critical of board meeting business.

Editors and contributors argued online that the request defined the fight: that the board, which acts politically, could not be allowed to meddle in the editorial process of the *Journal*.

Continued on back page

Assignment Kenya for J-'88 alumna

ANN SIMMONS, Columbia J-school '88, this spring becomes Nairobi correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*.

At the end of March she goes to Los Angeles for orientation and is expected to begin work in Africa in May.

Simmons has been with *Time* magazine for seven years, one year in New York, three in Moscow and the last three in Washington.

She split her most recent time covering the State Department and later social policy.

Simmons has family in England. She said she is looking forward to the cross-continental assignment.

Measure of racial climate?

I TRIED to tune out the O.J. Simpson civil trial. Not that I was sick of it as many people professed, it was just that my mind was engaged with other news. I became O.J.-engaged at the start of February because I was disturbed by reaction to the verdict.

First, who's deciding that the common wisdom is that the Simpson trial is a metaphor for U.S. race relations?

WAYNE DAWKINS Commentary

Simpson remains a black man who did not want to project an Africanized identity. I'm not suggesting he's an "oreo" or "uncle Tom" (line forms to the left for folk who love to do that). I don't recall Simpson scolding black causes or promoting them either.

I don't get it. Why are a lot of African-Americans making Simpson their poster child?

"This was they're (whites) way of evening the score," was the refrain from a number of black Los Angelenos interviewed in a cafe after the verdict.

How could they be so sure?

This time the jury was virtually white, reverse demographics of the black and brown jury that acquitted Simpson in the criminal trial.

But, the circumstances of the criminal and civil trials are as different as the pigmentation of the jurors.

In the first case the jurors had little choice: they were handed weak and poorly presented evidence by the prosecution. Jurors did not have enough to convict a guilty man.

Yes, I believe Simpson killed his wife and acquaintance Ronald Goldman.

Now in the civil trial Simpson testified, unlike the other trial. He stuck those designer shoes at issue in his mouth.

The threshold to prove fault or guilt is not as high in a civil trial. A life is not at stake, it's a livelihood. Simpson offered enough contradictions and gaps in credibility to indicate fault. His checkbook was punished.

Simpson was demonized by the families of the murder victims. "Will the Goldman's just shut up?" a white newsroom colleague talked out loud. What about the Browns, except for

sister Denise? The rest are strangely silent. Could it be that the family, metaphorically speaking, prostituted their daughter and sister?

Nicole was a white teenager matched with a much older black man with dough. That they got together without much public consternation is a metaphor for how much race relations changed in the late 20th century. Nevertheless, when Nicole and O.J. physically and verbally abused each other, the Brown family didn't seem so concerned about their child. Was O.J.'s money to good to them? The Goldman's scream bloody murder for their son Ron. The Browns have blood on their hands.

It's a shame that the verdict eclipsed more substantive talk about race relations and our future. Clinton talked about race in his State of the Union address. That was important because he was accused of avoiding discussions about race while campaigning for reelection. Now that he has the gig for four more years he can be attentive to the issue if he chooses.

Second, the GOP response came from the lone black Republican member of Congress, J.C. Watts of Oklahoma. In critiquing Clinton's vision, young Watts preached the conservative GOP dogma of less government and personal responsibility.

However, what I heard between the lines was a subtle challenge to his colleagues: the Republicans must become more inclusive and not lean on pandering to whites' fears and stereotypes about Americans of color.

If the U.S. political culture evolves significantly and becomes more racially balanced that will be a powerful statement on how we've changed.

LETTERS

Taste of the 'real' Midwest

RE: East clash with Midwest (Dawkins column, 10/96). You may be in the "heartland" but I wonder if the Chicago-Gary, Ind. area is really real Midwest.

I doubt if you see many people in your day-to-day life wearing bib overalls or 10-gallon hats or "chawing" and spitting tobacco into a paper cup.

Not that those are rights I enjoy here (in Kentucky) every day either.

I assume you have already been informed of all the curious sights to behold in this odd combination of North and South.

HOWARD MILLER, '81
Louisville, Ky.

Black Alumni Network Newsletter

Wayne J. Dawkins, editor
Betty Winston Baye,
Angela Chatman,
Cheryl Devall, E.R. Shipp
contributing editors

Published monthly (ISSN 1040-7758)

Jobline

The *Post-Tribune*, Gary, Ind. seeks **Copy/Design editors**; and **photo editor**. Send resume, recent work samples to Christopher J. Celek, assistant managing editor, Post-Tribune, 1065 Broadway, Gary, IN 46402. . . *The Village VOICE* seeks a **staff accountant** in the finance department; part-time **ad rep-solicitor/relief customer service/relief cashier**; **retail sales coordinator** in display advertising. Send resume c/o Terry West, 36 Cooper Square, New York, N.Y. 10003-7118...The *Boston Herald* seeks a No. 2 person for its **business desk**. Minimum five years daily reporting/editing experience for the supervisory post,

which includes assigning stories and graphics. Contact: Ted Bunker, business editor, the *Boston Herald*, One Herald Square, Boston, MA 02106. . . *The News & Observer*, a 150,000-daily and 210,000-Sunday, 1996 Pulitzer Prize-winning news-paper is seeking talented professionals for several positions: **Radio/TV/Film Reporter**; **Graphics Artist**; **Assigning Editor**; **Legislative Reporter**; **Graphics Intern**. All inquiries should include a resume, 5 to 7 clips of your best recent work and a cover letter explaining why you are interested in the N&O and what you can bring to the newspaper. Send everything to: William W. Sutton Jr., Assistant Managing Editor, The News & Observer, 215 S. McDowell St., Raleigh, NC 27605-1281. Or call 919-836-5911 (fax), 919-829-4530 (work).



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Lecturer/Facilities Manager for Summer, 1997 appointment.

12-month, non-tenure track but renewable position to manage modern college Telecommunications facility and teach broadcast news videography and editing at the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication. Will teach three sections yearly with primary focus on electronic news gathering. Other possibilities include studio production and introduction to production. Also responsible for management of maintenance, repair, installation and planning for facility including two television studios, a newsroom, 4 radio studios, 6 video editing labs, broadcast management lab, and field equipment. Some hands-on. Expectation of continuing service to the industry through such things as service-related professional work or technology exploration. Should be familiar with digital technology. Extensive major market or network level professional experience highly desirable. Master's degree preferred. Salary negotiable. The University of Georgia is an equal opportunity employer.

Application deadline: March 15, 1997. Send application, resume, professional samples and a list of references to:

David Hazinski
Search Committee Chair
College of Journalism & Mass Communication
Department of Telecommunications
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Athens, GA 30602

People

On Saturday, March 8 in Indianapolis **Betty Winston Baye**, '80, Louisville *Courier-Journal* editorial writer and columnist, is instructor for the "Writing with Passion" workshop at the Society of Professional Journalists Writer's Workshop. The venue is the Best Western Waterfront Plaza . . . **Norman Akili Buchanan**, '80, is living in Newark, N.J. He is a New School for Social Research lecturer (Black Images in Contemporary Film and Television) and teacher of video production at Montclair, N.J. High School. . . **Louis Stokes**, '78, director of editorial/public affairs for WXYZ-TV, Detroit, is secretary of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. Stokes' election last fall puts him in line to be president of NCEW in 2000. . . **A'Lelia Bundles**, '76, has been waging a persuasive campaign to get Madame C.J. Walker on a U.S. Postage stamp (*Emerge*, March). At least 65,000 support letters were sent to the citizen's commission that recommends the people, places and things on stamps. . . **Wayne Dawkins**, '80, wrote a dispatch about Gary, Ind. for the web paper *Our World News* last month. Gary was in the news when Federal Express considered eliminating night delivery because of fear of crime. FedEx reconsidered after vigorous protest and bad publicity. **Lisa Cox**, '92, was promoted to weekend news writer at WJLA-TV, Washington, D.C. She is also vice president of the Washington ABJ. . . **Reginald Stuart**, '71, joins *Emerge* magazine as a contributing editor, from the Knight-Ridder Washington bureau, where he was an editor. . .

— Let us know what you are doing and when you move. Send items and photos.

Struggle for soul

Continued from front page

The redesigned *Journal* has been mostly praised for its look and content but under fire for being late. The November/December issue went to press around Christmas Eve. It did not get into readers' hands until early February.

In February NABJ decided to kill the January/February issue and return with a March/April issue this month.

The e-mails whizzing back and forth for weeks were impassioned, at times mean and bitter.

The president pleaded for an end to e-mails that "air dirty linen."

The answer instead was a half dozen replies labeled "don't shoot the messengers."

But like a family fight in which regrettable words get said, some people late last month urged reconciliation and resolution.

All involved want the *NABJ Journal* to be a first-class publication.

The stakes were raised when it was changed last summer from a newsprint paper to a color magazine.

The association learned rough lessons in production. Copy arriving at the printer an hour late meant missing a turn and moving to get to the end of the line. The wait stretched to weeks to have the job printed.

Anyway, the March/April *Journal* was closed in late February. A few dozen people directly involved in its creation are anxious about what readers will see this spring.

— Wayne Dawkins

BULLETIN: The NABJ national office reports these candidates filed by Feb. 28 deadline. There may be an additional person's declaration in an unopened Federal Express envelope: President: Warner Saunders, Vanessa Williams; VP/Print: Dwight Lewis, Robin Stone; VP/Broadcast: Sharon Stevens; Treasurer: Rodney Brooks; Secretary: Herbert Lowe; Parliamentarian: Barbara Ciara, Roland Martin.

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Stories, editorial win scholarships
for 9 workshop participants in '96

PRINCETON, N.J. — Two college freshmen and seven high school seniors won \$1,000 college scholarships in the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund 1996 Summer Workshops Writing Competition. The winning entries

included feature stories, an editorial and first-person accounts in workshop newspapers. One entry that was not published in a workshop paper was a page one Sunday feature in the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

DOW JONES



NEWSPAPER FUND INC.

Twenty six students entered the writing competition. About 600 students participated in summer high school journalism workshops in 22 cities and District of Columbia. Winning entries appeared in workshop papers in Hartford, Conn.; San Jose, Calif.; San Antonio; Corvallis, Ore.; Philadelphia; San Francisco and Bakersfield, Calif.

The Newspaper Fund is a nonprofit foundation supported by the Dow Jones Foundation and other newspaper companies.

The Fund provides summer internships and scholarships to more than 100 college students at newspapers and news services through the newspaper editing intern program, real-time and on-line editing programs and business reporting program for minority students who are college sophomores and juniors.

It publishes two career guides — *The Journalist's Road to Success* and *Newspapers, Diversity & You*.

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Why I want to be pres'

NABJ candidates cite commitment

By **Angela Chatman**

CLEVELAND – Both candidates for president of the National Association of Black Journalists cited a commitment to the association and to black journalists as the reasons they are seeking the highest office.

"I want to build on some of the successes that we've had in the last few years," said Vanessa Williams, who currently is vice president for print.

She cited the organization's professional development programs and its growing scholarship fund as two of those successes.

Saunders said "I want to see if I can put the group back together and have us live out our commitment and be a little bit more focused on those goals."

Williams draws on her years as an active NABJ member and office holder as well as 16 years in the business. She worked for 11 years at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* before joining the staff of *The Washington Post* in May 1996. Before joining the *Inquirer*, Williams worked for *The St. Petersburg Times*. She has covered neighborhoods, social issues, politics and city government. Williams currently covers the city politics beat for the *Post*.

Continued on back page

IJE announces editing, management training

OAKLAND, Calif. – The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education announced its 1997 programs.

- The Editing Program for Minority Journalists is June 1-17 at the University of Arizona in Tucson. March 14 is the application deadline.
- The Multimedia Editing Forum is July 20-23 in Phoenix, hosted by Phoenix Newspapers Inc. and Arizona State University. June 20 is the application deadline.

Continued on back page

Applications down, J-school tuition for '98 up

Gentle decline linked to friendly economy

By **Toni Randolph**

BOSTON – Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism was to begin mailing acceptance letters to the incoming Class of '98 on April 1.

Admissions officials said the class arriving in the fall will probably be about the same size as the current group of students, about 212, despite an applicant pool that was slightly smaller than last year's.

Nine hundred ninety (990) people applied to the J-school this year.

Robert MacDonald, **About 22 %** director of Admissions and **of applicants** Financial Aid, attributed **were minorities** the lower number of applicants at least partly to the economy. "The job market is perceived to be better. More college graduates are opting to go to work for while," he said. The Class of '98 will be dominated by women. Mac Donald said about 60 percent of the applicants are women, 5 percent less than last year.

About 22 percent of the applicants were minorities, down from 25 percent the year before. But Mac Donald said the percentage of minorities enrolled in the Class of '98 may be higher than the percentage of minority applicants because traditionally more of the minorities who are accepted into the J-school choose to attend the school than do non-minorities.

Nearly all students will be seeking some sort of financial aid. According to Mac Donald, 95 percent of applicants requested loans and scholarships. That is an increase of 4 percent over last year. He said many students will need both forms of assistance in order to cover the cost of attending the J-School.

Continued on back page

Death spins urban myths

I was motoring north on I-65 to Northwest Indiana from Louisville last month when I read and heard the news about the shooting death of rap star Biggie Smalls.

I'm sorry another **WAYNE DAWKINS** young black life was wasted. **Commentary** The news left me cold. I had no feelings for the man, but unlike other people I don't cast him out of my mind as refuse.

I'm disturbed by the adulation for a young man who took pride in anti-social, self-destructive behavior. I understand that canonizing the depraved at times is the America way.

I resent the smearing and mythologizing of my old neighborhood, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Can't blame the media largely for this one. Rappers and their fans spun reporters to the 'hood-as-hell legend.

"He wuz all dat," some adoring African-American teenage girls shouted to reporters at the funeral in Bed-Stuy. Some young men waxed about the significant meaning in Biggie's rap "messages."

Excuse me, weren't we talking about a self-proclaimed drug dealer?

I didn't know much about Biggie until he got in our face in about two years ago at my former gig in Camden, N.J.

The police reporter returned from the cop shop shaking his head. He was slightly amused about a "Notorious B.I.G." guy from New York who mugged someone.

Who says Biggie had to sell poison to support his family?

He said. But he didn't have to do it.

If Biggie Smalls really was just scraping by, why did he also brag about his endless flow of cash, the '90s-style harem of pretty women he could lay down with, the cars and other goodies.

We're not talking about a working-class

Joe. He knew his life was fast, hedonistic, dangerous and certain to be brief.

Like dead rival Tupac Shakur, Biggie said he was ready to die, but for what?

As a sacrifice to assure other people's liberation? Or at least to build a better life for his immediate family? Or was the real deal grab all the pleasure I can then I'm outta here?

I resented Biggie's sound bites about how rough Bed-Stuy is and why he was left no choice but to sell drugs and live the thug life.

Bedford-Stuyvesant was home to a quarter-million residents when I grew up there in the '60s and '70s.

There was street crime and drugs and childhood bullies apprenticing to be adult thugs.

But those grim realities were not as powerful as others: A sense of community. Streets where kids could jump rope, play tag, play stick ball and act out fantasies that they were Willie Mays. Adults taking time to teach manners, exact discipline and teach you to be proud of who you are and to love yourself.

I risk sounding nostalgic. Nostalgia does not necessarily neutralize mythicized depravity.

I don't live in Bed-Stuy anymore. Yes, you can't go home again. Maybe more has changed than I can appreciate.

Anyway, I'll bet for all the mentions of thug life in the 'hood that are blips on the news, the neighborhood isn't only that. There are people struggling to maintain stability and calm. Meanwhile, others are thriving in Bedford-Stuyvesant, boosting the neighborhood economy and nourishing it culturally. I want to hear about these folks too the next time I hear the community that shaped me on the news.

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August Press (219) 736-5436.

The publishing date for the new edition is June 30.

ISBN 0-9635720-4-0

Black Alumni Network Newsletter

Wayne J. Dawkins, editor
Betty Winston Baye,
Angela Chatman,
Cheryl Devall, E.R. Shipp
contributing editors
Published monthly (ISSN 1040-7758)

Jobline

The *Post-Tribune*, Gary, Ind. seeks **Copy/Design editors**. Send resume, recent work samples to Christopher J. Celek, assistant managing editor, *Post-Tribune*, 1065 Broadway, Gary, IN 46402. . . *The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* seeks an **assistant metro editor** to supervise the urban affairs reporting

team. Contact George Stanley, managing editor, or Barbara Dembski, senior editor, administration, 918 N. Fourth St., Milwaukee, WI 53201. . . *The Florida Times-Union* in Jacksonville (190,000 circulation) seeks an **assistant metro editor** to supervise education, health and general assignment reporting, and the paper also seeks a **bureau chief** (Tallahassee) and **copy editor/page designers**. Contact Phil Milano, staff development editor, (800) 472-6397, extension 4483. . . WHYY TV12-FM91, has these openings: **Associate producer**, TV production/programming (aid in planning, production, editing and evaluation of TV programming). Also, unpaid **internships** for college credit are available in news, marketing, development and public information. Send resume to Maureen Pilla, employment manager, WHYY, Inc., 150 N. Sixth St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19106. . . *The News & Observer*, a 150,000-daily and 210,000-Sunday, 1996 Pulitzer Prize-winning news-paper is seeking talented professionals for several positions: **Metro reporter ; graphics artist ; copy editor**. All inquiries should include a resume, 5 to 7 clips of your best recent work and a cover letter explaining why you are interested in the N&O and what you can bring to the newspaper. Send everything to: William W. Sutton Jr., Assistant Managing Editor, The News & Observer, 215 S. McDowell St., Raleigh, NC 27605-1281. Or call 919-836-5911 (fax), 919-829-4530 (work).

Advertisers:

The deadline to reserve space is the 15th of the month.

- Eighth page \$75 (two insertions, \$125);
- quarter page \$125 (two insertions \$200).

People

Michelle Johnson, '82, who has been running an online service for about a year says it is keeping her very busy: "I'm working on a public service project for HBO. Got involved through a non-profit up here. We're working on the "companion web site" for a series on substance abuse. Also working on a site on gun violence as part of a "Safe Schools" project. I really like doing this kind of thing." . . . **Yolanda Joe**, '85; wrote a second novel, *He Say, She Say* (Doubleday) that is a local bestseller in Chicagoland. Joe is a news writer at WBBM TV-2 (CBS). . . **Betty Winston Baye**, '80, is a contributor to the book *Friend of a Friend: Inspiring Stories of Black America's Quest to Improve the Lives of It's Children*. The 132-page paperback was published by the NABJ Children's Project and was funded by the Freedom Forum. . . We heard from **Delbert Ellerton**, '93. He is a reporter at the *Atlanta Constitution and Journal*. Before that he was with *Daily Press* in Newport News-Hampton, Va. . . The Columbia Journalism Alumni Association **Spring Meeting** is April 24 in New York. There are class reunions planned for the classes of 1977, 1982 and others.

— Let us know what you are doing and when you move. Send items and photos.

Regional conferences, NABJ

"Pathways to Excellence" is the theme of the **Region 6** (Ind., Ohio, Ky.) conference. It is Thursday to Sunday **April 24-27**. NABJ-Cincinnati is the host. It is at the Drawbridge Estate in Fort Mitchell, Ky.

Registration is \$100 on site. Hotel room rate is \$72 per night single or double (1-800-354-9793).

Make checks payable to NABJ/Cincinnati c/o NABJ Region 6, P.O. Box 141296, Cincinnati, OH 45250-1296. Questions?: e-mail nabjcinti@aol.com, or call Leisa Richardson (513) 352-5011.

ALSO:

• Region 4 (Southern states), April 18-20, Jackson, Miss. Also that weekend Regions 5 (Midwest) and Region 7 (Great Plains), Milwaukee.

• Region 9 (Rocky Mountain) and Region 10 (West Coast), April 25-27, Phoenix.

Call (301)405-8500; fax 405-8555.

J-school applications

Continued from front page

"The need for scholarships is more pronounced than 10 years ago. The most significant change in financial aid for our school is that students used to just have loans, and that covered tuition, but now tuition is higher," MacDonald said. Tuition and fees for next year will be \$22,900, up 6 percent from last year. With room, board and other expenses, total costs will be \$37,800.

There is some good news, though. Mac Donald said there has been a lot of interest in J-school graduates from employers. "People who come to the school next year probably have a better chance of getting a job," he said.

The writer, a 1988 Columbia J-school graduate, is with WBUR-FM (NPR)

NABJ candidates

Continued from front page

"I have the experience," she said. "I know the game. I know most of the people."

Saunders, president of the affiliate Chicago Association of Black Journalists, has 28 years in the business. He started in the late 1960s working on several public affairs programs for Chicago broadcast stations.

In 1982, he joined the staff of NBC Chicago affiliate, WMAQ TV-5, as a sports anchor and reporter. He currently is anchor and reporter for the 5 p.m. newscast.

Watchers of NBC's "ER" will recognize him as the sometime telecaster on that show.

"We all have the same problems," said Saunders, adding that a strong NABJ can

provide the type of support system blacks in journalism need.

This year's presidential race promises to be a lot livelier than two years ago when only Philadelphia newsman Arthur Fennell stepped forward to take the reigns of the organization.

This year, both the print and broadcast mediums will have competitive races, as well.

The writer, a 1977 Columbia J-school graduate, is with the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Maynard IJE programs

Continued from front page

- Digital Editing and Design will be conducted June 18-21 at the Native American Journalists Association convention in Minneapolis. May 19 is the application deadline. The program repeats August 14-15 at the Asian American Journalists convention in Boston. July 14 is the application deadline.
- Multimedia reporting forum, Sep. 25-27. San Francisco Bay Area. Application deadline Aug. 25.
- Media Financial Management, June 2-6 in Seattle at the National Association of Hispanic Journalists convention. Application deadline May 5.
- Digital Publishing, July 14-18, conducted at the National Association of Black Journalists convention, Chicago. Application deadline, June 16.
- Management Training Center, July 27-August 30, J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. Application deadline, March 14.
- Executive Leadership Forum, Aug. 27-29, Northwestern University. Application deadline July 28.
- Team Management, August 25-29 conducted at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Convention, Chicago. Application deadline July 24.

Special event

The Maynard Memorial Dialogue, May 7 at the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, New York City: An ongoing series of conversations on issues affecting the press, the public and politics.

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NABJ board uphold decision to destroy meeting records

Narrowly agrees to continue new practice of erasing audio tapes

By **Wayne Dawkins**

The National Association of Black Journalists board of directors voted 9-7 to continue erasing audio tapes of its meeting minutes.

Board Secretary Herbert Lowe said the vote

during the weekend of April 11-13 in Chicago narrowly defeated a motion to end the recent practice of destroying the records.

Proponents of erasing say other associations do this as protection against lawsuits. Opponents say it is contradictory for a journalists organization to destroy records while its mission is to fight for free flow of information and robust debate.

In other action,

- Gracie Lawson, a former *Chicago Tribune* features editor, was introduced as the new editor of the *NABJ Journal*. Lawson succeeds Angela Dodson. Dodson presided over the *Journal's* change from a tabloid on newsprint to a four-color bimonthly magazine since July 1996.

- Randy Bullock, president of the Detroit Chapter of NABJ and president of the Council of (chapter) Presidents said the council is moving to make it a "viable entity," a standing committee within NABJ. Amending the constitution may be necessary to accomplish this, she said. Sixteen chapter presidents attended the spring meeting.

- NABJ in April had about 2,300 members, said Parliamentary Angelo Henderson. Those numbers however should predictably ascend soon. Membership is seasonal and there is a "buildup" said Henderson just before conventions in late summer. Projected is 700 to 1,000 additional members before the convention here July 14-20.

- West Virginia was approved as the 67th professional affiliate chapter, said Lowe. Five new student chapters were approved: Northwestern State of Louisiana; University of Florida; Southwestern Louisiana; Prairie View A&M University (Texas) and Kent State University (Ohio).

Spring alumni reunion: '82 typewriter class ponders realities of cyber-journalism

By **Cheryl Devall**

NEW YORK – During the weekend of April 25-26, Columbia University J-school welcomed back 105 alumni/ae for tours, lectures and a buffet luncheon in the construction-site-in-progress known as the

Journalism Building.

Most of the returning alums were from the 10th, 20th and 25th reunion classes.

As part of the annual alumni meeting, the school awarded distinguished alumni honors to Dinah Eng, '77, a Gannett News Service columnist; Philip Hamburger, '38, of *The New Yorker*; James B. McClatchy, '49, publisher of the newspaper chain that bears his family's name, and Peter S. McGee, '60, vice president for national programming at WGBH Public Television in Boston.

Continued on page 3

Dick Blood No Pedestrian-Reporting Scholarship Fund

Columbia Journalism alumni are invited to support the Richard Blood No Pedestrian-Reporting Scholarship Fund, established in honor of the professor's 17 years at the school.

For those who survived his tutelage, he is impossible to forget.

We remember him standing behind his podium, biting his lip, challenging us: "Are you any good?" he pushed his students harder than any other instructor, augmenting the school's rigorous curriculum with his own terrifying refinements; the infamous landmark project, the mayor's management report assignment, trips to the corner to which he subjected some of the classes.

It was never easy: We gave him every spare moment and went without sleep for months, but when

Continued on back page

Reminder: Send your gift to the Black Alumni Network Scholarship Fund. Call (212) 854-3865.

'Moma D's' subtle power

My mother is one of the most powerful people I know. My claim should seem odd to a lot of people.

Iris Carmen McFarquhar Dawkins never learned to drive a car; she rides subways and buses.

She does not have credit cards or a checking account. Bad experiences 30 years ago convinced her to pay by cash or money order only.

She doesn't have a lot

of fancy education. Formal schooling for mom was through the

eighth grade. That was a lot of schooling for many people of her generation.

I'm thinking a lot about "Moma D," the nickname my neighborhood friends pinned on her 25 years ago, because it is Mother's Day season.

Also, Moma D is midway through her 75th birthday. I look back with amazement and appreciation at what she accomplished with what appears to be so little based on a superficial glance.

My mom is powerful in ways that are not obvious in a material and status-conscious world.

So are many other moms who did so much for their kids with so little for themselves.

I have two college degrees. I fulfilled my desire to be a journalist. I've traveled all around the USA and parts of the Americas. I have goals and dreams to do

much more with my life.

I owe my spirit of adventure, curiosity and excellence to my parents and especially, Moma D.

The newspaper habit came from my parents. Mom sent me to the corner store to buy the New York *Daily News* for 5 cents. We'd read what was in the paper and talk about it.

My multicultural world view is hardly self-made. Moma D told her sons to be proud of who they are and where they come from.

She talked to us about race. We were carefully taught not to feel inferior or intimidated by whites and not to hate them either. More than lecture and counsel we learned by example. We watched what Moma D did.

She was fearless. I was suffering quietly in the sixth grade of a chaotic junior high school in Bedford-Stuyvesant. My grades nose dived. I was more withdrawn than normal at age 11. Moma D grilled me to find out what was wrong. Then she marched up to Board of Education headquarters and got me bused to another school, reuniting me with elementary school friends.

The Board of Ed bureaucracy routinely crushes challengers.

It did not stand a chance against my mother.

I benefited from a traditional sixth grade instruction in an elementary school then I went to junior and senior high school in Bensonhurst.

Riding subways for 90 minutes a day for six years is partially why a like to travel. Also, because Moma D sold Avon for 20 years. From the fifth grade on I was her bookkeeper and deliverer. When her customer friends moved to far away corners of New York, I took the cosmetics to them.

I was riding subways solo at age 10 and during my adolescence I could claim seeing every New York neighborhood except a few corners of Staten Island.

Mom didn't make money from Avon, it was pocket change that paid bills. The experience taught me a work ethic that influenced me as an adult.

I became the journalist. Keith, three years younger than me, is now a NYC Corrections officer and union representative. Richard, 10 years younger and the baby, is a chef in San Francisco.

Talk about travel, Richie spent summers in France, Germany and Spain to enhance his culinary art.

But learning to cook started with Moma D. She insisted that all her boys know to cook. She stressed independence.

Moma D was a traditional homemaker and did not begin an office job until she was in her mid-fifties. Today she goes to her part-time job at the Department for the Aging near City Hall in Manhattan. Cataracts robbed Moma D of sight in one eye 10 years ago but she navigates the IRT subway and gets to work.

Moma D stressed independence and demands it. She says she likes her space and solitude. She spurned my offers to live with us. Moma D, you're rich in spirit and values beyond comprehension. Thanks for everything.

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Black Alumni Network Newsletter

Wayne J. Dawkins, editor
Betty Winston Baye,
Angela Chatman,
Cheryl Devall, E.R. Shipp
contributing editors
Published monthly (ISSN 1040-7758)

Spring J-alumni reunions

Continued from front page

Smaller gatherings branched out from the weekend's formal agenda. On Saturday afternoon, about 15 members of the J-school class of '82 turned up at the West End Cafe across Broadway from Columbia.

Time has been very good to us - around this cluster of tables there were few crows' feet, gray hairs or extra pounds to betray that we lived through the era of manual typewriters bolted to the desks.

The discussion ranged from an extended "where are they now?" focused on absent classmates to a serious discourse on the future of our craft.

The topics were the same ones we read about in *Columbia Journalism Review* - the tabloidization and increased celebrity focus in mainstream news, the shrinking news hole, the sinking status of journalists in the public eye.

As drinks and munchies progressed to dinner at a nearby Vietnamese restaurant, we relished the opportunity to hash out these issues with other thoughtful practitioners of the craft. The group included TV producers, a columnist for *Newsday*, a law professor, and a national correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*.

Deborah Higgins, who earned a master's in business administration simultaneously with her M.S. from the J-school, is a strategic planner for *Consumer Reports*, trying to grow the subscriber base and influence of that non-profit magazine.

At least two of us work for online media - one at the *Providence Journal* and Michelle Johnson as an independent cyber-consultant. We talked about the prospect of a Pulitzer Prize in online journalism, and about the potential for taking reporting to a new level through online research, graphics and the expanded treatments unavailable on the printed page.

Shirley Kwan-Kisaichi, an independent TV and documentary producer, organized the 15th reunion gathering.

Shirley's e-mails and exhortations alerted some of us outside the New York area who had not received notices about the reunion from Columbia itself.

We resolved to work toward an even larger showing - especially from New York area classmates and *Black Alumni Network* readers - five years from now, and possibly before.

The writer is a Miami-based correspondent for National Public Radio

Breaking Through, Inc., a new company formed by news manager Sidmel Estes-Sumpter of WAGA-TV in Atlanta and correspondent Sheila Stainback of CNBC in New York, is assisting news organizations who are interested in placing African American writers, producers and assignment editors in their newsrooms. (404)294-1021.

Maynard Institute editing, management programs

OAKLAND, Calif. - This is the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education 1997 schedule.

- The Editing Program for Minority Journalists is June 1-July 25 at the University of Arizona in Tucson. March 14 is the application deadline.
- The Multimedia Editing Forum is July 20-23 in Phoenix, hosted by Phoenix Newspapers Inc. and Arizona State University. June 20 application deadline.
- Digital Editing and Design will be conducted June 18-21 at the Native American Journalists Association convention in Minneapolis. May 19 is the application deadline. The program repeats August 14-15 at the Asian American Journalists convention in Boston. July 14 is the application deadline.
- Multimedia reporting forum, Sep. 25-27. San Francisco Bay Area. Application deadline Aug. 25.
- Digital Publishing, July 14-18, conducted at the National Association of Black Journalists convention, Chicago. Application deadline, June 16.
- Executive Leadership Forum, Aug. 27-29, Northwestern University. Application deadline July 28.
- Team Management, August 25-29 conducted at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Convention, Chicago. Application deadline July 24.

People

"NABJ is a family and sometimes, a dysfunctional family," **Betty Winston Baye**, '80, told about 60 members from Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and West Virginia. Baye was the keynote speaker at the Region 6 conference in greater Cincinnati. She urged members to rekindle the passion and sense of mission in their work. . . **Lawrence Aaron**, '70, sets the record straight. Before joining the Virgin Islands *Daily News* Aaron's last position at Gannett Suburban Newspapers was editor of the business and real estate sections in Rockland County. Before that he was day editor, night

editor, a news editor, assistant city editor for business and real estate and an editor of special sections in Westchester County. **Frank McCoy**, '85, continues to put out a comprehensive business section for *OurWorldNews* on the web and also does a business news program on Netnoir. . . Welcome to the new drug battle zone: Overwhelmingly white, Midwest America, ravaged by a methamphetamine epidemic. **Wayne Dawkins**, '80, wrote about it for *Our World News* in April.

— Let us know what you are doing and when you move. Send items and photos.

No Pedestrian-Reporting Fund

Continued from front page

we staggered out of his class, we knew we were prepared for any professional challenge we would encounter outside school.

In 1996 the Fund awarded \$700 to Ellyn Martens, who wrote about the rising mortality rate among New York City firefighters. She produced a story that, as Blood would say, "sings and soars."

The fund held \$2,745 in March; to endow it requires \$25,000. Send gifts to the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, P.O. Box 19023, New York, NY 10277-0109.

By Stephanie Argy; Raney Aronson; Ellen Butler; Gene Choo; Maria Sanminielli and Erin Texeira.

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Getting a feel for S. Florida

MIAMI – In my efforts to “get” this place to which I’ve moved, I have engaged in seemingly endless research. Regardless of the story, I’ve tried whenever possible to feel out interview subjects about their take on life in these parts.

I’ve gotten up early and stayed up late to absorb the morning paper and the nightly news in English and Spanish; I’ve read or re-read C.L.R. James’ *The Black Jacobins*, Cristina Garcia’s *Dreaming in Cuban* and Marjory Stoneman Douglas’ *The Everglades*:

River of Grass, and whatever

else I could get my hands on about the social and natural history of this singular region. As exquisite, blossom-filled days and gentle, balmy nights unfolded outside my windows I may as well been in chilly Chicago, so little non-interview time have I spent outdoors.

The necessity of getting out – of learning not just from fact but from experience – became clear once again on a recent weekend, on which I’d somehow committed to numerous “extracurricular” activities.

Thursday night, a local Haitian restaurant screened a video documentary about the experience of Haitian emigres to Florida. But just as edifying were the conversations I had that night with people who had lived that experience, and with various lawyers and clergy who had lent them a hand.

Although I brought and passed along my business card (especially during these first few months in a new city, I don’t leave home without ‘em), I wasn’t acting strictly within the conventions of reportage. I learned plenty and the people I met encouraged me to hang out with them and learn some more.

During the same weekend, the Boys’ Choir of Harlem was appearing in West Palm Beach, two counties and several income brackets north of Miami.

About half the audience – the black half – had also come from outside Palm Beach County for this matinee.

Continued on back page



Cheryl Devall
Miami Spice

Candidate exits

Saunders withdraws, Williams is lone NABJ presidential candidate

By Wayne Dawkins

Two months before the election, Chicago anchorman Warner Saunders has withdrawn as a candidate for president of the National Association of Black Journalists. That leaves Vice President/Print Vanessa Williams as the only declared candidate.

“It is with a deep sense of regret that I must withdraw my candidacy,” wrote Saunders in a May 16 statement. “Today I was named the new 6 and 10 o’clock anchor of our newscast here at NBC-5 Chicago. As you can imagine, this new position also demands a tremendous time commitment that will inevitably prevent me from participating in other activities.”

Saunders was the 5 p.m. anchor. His promotion was related to the resignation of two prime-time anchors

Continued on back page

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Donnette Dunbar, '88, set out to write a childrens book but the final product is an interactive CD-ROM. “Island Girl” is an Afrocentric immigrant story that is partially autobiographical. The CD-ROM has 20 minutes of original music and 20 minutes of animation. Dunbar, 30, moved to the USA from Jamaica in 1981. She is a features writer at the Omaha *World-Herald*. Visit her website, www.alternetcom.com. Or, “Island Girl” can be ordered from Alternet Communications, Box 3492, Omaha, NE 68103-3492.

'Cool,' but is it jazz?

In the '90s June is promoted as Black Music Month, 30 days to give special focus to an art and industry that transformed America and the world.

I'll step back 20 years to the late '70s. I was a recent college grad-

uate with more leisure time

than I could possibly appreciate. I became a

serious jazz LP (that's long

playing album for those of you accustomed to CDs and cassettes) collector.

I had a habit of hopping the subway Fridays after work from downtown Brooklyn to travel several stops to lower Manhattan to mine record racks at J&R Music World.

Miles Davis' CBS recordings from the '50s, '60s and early '70s sold for \$3.99, a buck or two less than the newest releases. I saw a chance to build a rich collection so I'd often buy one of his and one of something else, maybe jazz, maybe R&B or pop.

Another bargain was Milestone/Fantasy twofers: double LPs for \$5.99. The record jackets had larger-than-life photo portraits of the artist. "John Coltrane" in tabloid-size type was overlaid on a pensive portrait of the genius of Afro-Blue. Trane does a smoldering passionate interpretation of the ballad "Good bait" by Count Basie.

Another LP cover burned into memory: (Julian) "Cannonball Adderley." I still find it remarkable that in the late '60s on top-40 radio, I heard "Mercy, Mercy Mercy" by Adderley. The call-and-respond blues tune was smothered with pain, relief and reconciliation.

But not pity. Trane, Cannonball, Miles, Monk, Mingus and their peers were nobility. They used music to define the Negro-colored-black struggle in America.

They "walked tall"; Cannonball even wrote a driving anthem by that name.

Even when the royalty clowned around they were deep as the ocean.

True to form, I caught Dizzy Gillespie on a televised jazz fest in Florida in the '80s playing his trademark bent bell trumpet. He wore a cardboard Burger King crown hat. Dizzy was consistently a clown from the time he burst on the scene in the 1940s but he always entertained and taught us at the same time. He reminded us that black music in the Americas linked the USA, Cuba and Brazil.

Another clown, Louis Armstrong demonstrated his love for black people worldwide by acts, not fiery words. Playing his trumpet at Ghana's independence

ceremony in the '50s said more about the man than pot shots accusing Lotie of being a "Tom."

As I look back a little I have this wish for the present and future: that jazz or Afro-American classical music, keep its compass.

WAYNE DAWKINS Commentary

Its syncopation and harmonies must have the tension, irony and playfulness that connects with elites and grass roots. It can't succumb solely to marketing and packaging.

A lot of "cool jazz" radio stations play a lot of wonderful pop music and jazzy (but not jazz) recordings that are pretty and pleasant. But jazz should not be just pretty and calm. It must be all emotions:

Wrenching pain from lost love, ecstasy from new love, even lust. Anthems that exude courage, pride and determination, even when the odds seem impossible. Anger, rage at injustice. Joy and humor from the pleasure of family and friends.

I hear these feelings whenever I have the good sense to play my recordings. Now as a middle-aged adult it seems I never have time to relax and just listen to music. But when I make the time the satisfaction and psychological relief is priceless.

Finally, let's not overlook the significant achievement that occurred in April. Wynton Marsalis won the Pulitzer prize for music.

For 17 years he has been respecting and redefining (creating and archiving) one major form of great black music. Marsalis' Pulitzer is vindication of sorts. He really won it for someone else. The Pulitzer board declined to recognize Duke Ellington decades ago.

I hope Edward Kennedy Ellington is smiling from his orchestra stand in heaven.

Black Journalists

The NABJ STORY

Wayne Dawkins

Updated, expanded edition

On sale. Five new chapters, 288 pages, illustrations. Authoritative, essential, exclusive. \$14 plus \$2 shipping. August Press (800) 268-4338.

Jobline

The *Post-Tribune*, Gary, Ind. seeks **copy/design editors, features editor, swing editor, reporters and a sports columnist.** Send resume, recent work samples to Christopher J. Celek, assistant managing editor, *Post-Tribune*, 1065 Broadway, Gary, IN 46402. . . . The *Florida Times-Union* in Jacksonville (190,000 circulation) seeks an **assistant metro editor** to supervise education, health and general assignment reporting. Contact Phil Milano, staff development editor, (800) 472-6397, extension 4483. . . . WHY TV 12-FM91, has these openings: **Associate producer**, TV production/programming (aid in planning, production editing and evaluation of TV programming) and **associate producer**, 12 Tonight (Delaware Broadcast Center, Wilmington. Send resume to Maureen Pilla, employment manager, WHY TV, Inc., 150 N. Sixth St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19106. . . . The *News & Observer*, a 150,000-daily and 210,000-Sunday, 1996 Pulitzer Prize-winning news-paper is seeking a **technology reporter.** Include a resume, 5 to 7 clips of your best recent work and a cover letter explaining why you are interested in the N&O and what you can bring to the newspaper. Send to: William W. Sutton Jr., Assistant Managing Editor, *The News & Observer*, 215 S. McDowell St., Raleigh, NC 27605-1281. Or call 919-836-5911 (fax), 919-829-4530 (work). . . . *Network World*, a news-weekly in the high-tech industry, is looking for a **copy editor and layout editor.** Send resumes to: Human Resources, Network World, 161 Worcester Road, Framingham, MA 01701. Fax: 508/820-3340; e-mail: dyolpe@nww.com . . .

People

A'Lelia Bundles, '76, spent six days in April as a visiting faculty member at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies during the "Improving diversity" seminar. She is with ABC News in Washington. . . . **Fred Johnson, '80**, says he is preparing for his third season as a writer with the TV

sitcom "Moesha". . . . **Alvin Bessent, '82**, an editorial writer with Newsday, was selected for the 1998 class of Knight Journalism Fellows at Stanford University. He's an editorial writer for Newsday. . . . **Melanie Eversley, '88**, a Detroit Free Press reporter, moves from the home base to the paper's Washington bureau. . . . **Suzanne Malveau, '91**, moves from reporter at WRC-TV in Washington to correspondent with NBC-News. She begins this month and will be doing reports for MSNBC, Weekend TODAY and Nightly News.

— Let us know what you are doing and when you move. Send items and photos.

Maynard Institute editing, management programs

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 - Team Management, August 25-29 conducted at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Convention, Chicago. Application deadline July 24.
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Newsletter

Wayne J. Dawkins, editor
Betty Winston Baye,
Angela Chatman,
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contributing editors
Published monthly (ISSN 1040-7758)

Miami Splice

Continued from front page

But there was no distinction when it came to the response. The auditorium thundered with applause during and after a delightful program of classical and contemporary music.

The Episcopalian couple next to me, who said they usually watched polo matches on weekend afternoon (as Dave Barry would say, "I am not making this up"), told me that as longtime subscribers to this performing arts center, they had never seen such a warm reception.

Palm Beach audiences, they said, are notorious for walking out on programs they don't like. On this afternoon they were on their feet, all right, applauding for more. It was truly refreshing to spend a few hours focused on the things we human beings embrace in common.

WHICH BRINGS me to a third highlight of a busy weekend, late-night club hopping with a fellow writer. Two misses – lame DJs and near-empty dance floors – finally compelled us to a third venue on Little Havana's Calle Ocho (Eighth Street).

Cafe Nostalgia was a definite hit. It offered an inclusive, check-your-politics-at-the-door atmosphere, a sizzling house band and an exquisite selection of vintage Cuban music shorts from the collection of the owner, a former director of the Havana Film Festival.

Before long I was stretching my limited Spanish to chat with total strangers, allowing the tail, dark and fine lead singer to teach me a few steps and work up a sanctified sweat on the packed dance floor.

As my hips and feet were so engaged, I remembered what most folks already know – that rhythm (and blues) are as valid a route to knowledge as empirical fact-finding.

And since Miami joints stay open until 5 a.m., I hope to burn a lot of midnight oil.

The writer, J-'82, a correspondent for National Public Radio, moved from Chicago to Miami in October.
Photo by Jeffrey Allan Salter

Candidate exits

Continued from front page

who protested the hiring of trash talk show host Jerry Springer to do on-air commentaries. Springer resigned after one week and two commentaries. He received non-stop criticism by journalists and viewers.

Saunders is president of the Chicago Association of Black Journalists, which claims to be the largest of nearly 70 chapters. Having a large number base was to pose a stiff challenge to Williams, a *Washington Post* reporter and long-time board member. She has served as vice president, regional director and chapter president in Philadelphia. The 1995 presidency was uncontested. Arthur Fennell of Philadelphia was elected. The presidency was competitive in 1991 and 1993.

For the first time, NABJ members can use VISA or MasterCard to pay convention registration in addition to check, money order or cash. On the application list the account number, expiration date, name, billing address and signature. Friday, **June 13** is the pre-registration **deadline** for the July 16-20 convention in Chicago. Fees are \$275 for NABJ members, \$250 if they also belong to a chapter, \$175 for students, \$200/\$125 for spouses and children. After June 13, on-site fees are double. The convention hotel is the Hyatt Regency Chicago. "Committed to the Cause," is this year's convention theme.

Other media news: Bennie Ivory was named editor of *The Courier-Journal* in Louisville, Ky. He was editor of the Wilmington, Del. *News Journal*. Both papers are owned by Gannett Co. . . the newspaper strike is over in Detroit but animosity and unresolved issues remain. The unions representing the *Free Press* and *Detroit News* say many strikers have been replaced and locked out of their jobs. . . Knight-Ridder acquired four newspapers from Disney-ABC-Cap Cities. They include the *Kansas City Star* and the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Obituaries: *Chicago Daily Defender* publisher John Stengstacke (May 28), *Chicago* columnist Mike Royko; New York columnist Murray Kempton, Nancy Woodhull, longtime Gannett Co. executive and champion of gender and diversity issues.

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Packed house, non-stop action anticipated at Chicago convention

By **Wayne Dawkins**

The Chicago National Association of Black Journalists convention July 16-20 is positioned to set new attendance records.

DeOtis Fields, certified meeting professional at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, said at least 80 percent, or 1,600 of 2,019 rooms at the main convention hotel, were reserved by NABJ participants on the peak nights, Thursday and Friday July 17-18.

Capacity is also high and filling up fast at Swissotel and Fairmont, spill over hotels, say Chicago Association of Black Journalists hosts. Hosts Lynn Norment and Warner Saunders projected 4,500 to 5,000 people coming to the convention.

Even a conservative projection based on hotel occupancy would mean at least 3,000 attendees. Last year in Nashville, at least 1,800 people attended.

Special events

- Convention souvenir bag stuffing party, 10 a.m. Sunday July 13 at the Swissotel, Wacker Drive. Volunteers will be treated to music, food, beverages.
- Chicago House of Blues scholarship fund-raising party, 8 p.m. Tuesday July 15. Tickets \$20, first 1,000 guests.
- Old School-New School Jam (for CABJ scholarship fund), 9 p.m. Friday July 18, Hyatt Regency ballroom. Tickets \$15 for first 2,000 guests. Tom Joyner, emcee; invited artists Tamia, Solo and Rose Royce.
- Opening reception at Art Institute of Chicago, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 16 (sponsored by Ebony and Chrysler).
- Chicago city club crawl, 8 p.m. until. Buses leave Navy Pier and Hyatt Regency. \$5.
- NABJ Golf Classic, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. tee off Tuesday, July 15. At Harborside International Golf course. Transportation from Hyatt Regency. Cost: \$150 per player; \$600 for a foursome.

Grand prize, use of a Chrysler Sebring convertible for one year for a hole-in-one.

Irony?

The last Chicago ABJ meeting before the convention was held in its usual place, NBC-5

(WMAQ). About 90 people nearly filled the studio where the Jerry Springer show is broadcast.

When the trash-talk host was tapped in early spring to do weekly commentaries on the local evening news, two lead anchors protested then left. Springer

Continued on back page

J-school reception

The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism cordially invites you to meet **Dean Tom Goldstein**, Thursday, July 17, 6:30-8 p.m., Hyatt Regency Chicago in Illinois Center Regency Room A, West Tower, Ballroom Level 151 East Wacker Drive, Chicago during the convention of the National Association of Black Journalists

RSVP by July 11
212-854-3864 or
alumni@jrn.columbia.edu

... and (alumni) breakfast

Saturday, July 19, 8 a.m.
All Seasons Cafe, inside the Hyatt Regency. At least 20 places have been reserved. Please RSVP with Angela Chatman, '77, (216) 999-4115 or AngChat@aol.com

Who's a journalist?

Content provider?

That's a term used to define online journalists.

The phrase late last year surfaced in an article in Columbia Journalism Review (November/December).

Many of them are recent

WAYNE

graduates in their twenties. It appears

DAWKINS

many of these "content providers"

Commentary

are technicians. They are adept at logging information into a web page or an e-mail "magazine."

But, are they journalists?

In some cases, maybe. Others definitely not.

The news industry is sorting that out this year.

African-American journalists can not wait to be defined, then follow the media industry's lead. It is our responsibility to define what a journalist *is* and *is not*.

This means embracing the new tools we have:

laptop computers, web pages, e-mail, cell phones, pagers, image scanners and faxes. We take these tools and marry them with our core beliefs as journalists: Journalists are people who gather and disseminate news.

- Gatherers report and analyze;
- editors package and polish the news report.

Technology is never a substitute for passion.

It is never a substitute for desire to get the truth and print it, or, broadcast it.

We must heed the counsel of Lani Guiner, the University of Pennsylvania law professor. She reminded blacks journalists in 1993 of the Quaker creed to "speak truth to power." Resist temptation, said Guiner, to be "stenographers to power."

We must remember our roots. Look back as we also stride forward.

When the National Association of Black Journalists was founded in 1975 it was after at least five years of false starts. Forty four (44) courageous men and women unblinkingly defined *who* is a journalist.

Wisely, founders said that its decision makers and core members would not be public relations professionals, disc jockeys and in many cases free-lancers and journalism professors. Our association clearly defined what a journalist is and what journalists do. We did the near impossible: set rules for an unlicensed profession; Journalism American-style.

This decision meant a lot of pain during the formative years of NABJ. The decision angered potential allies. It caused many people to be estranged from us.

Despite it all, history has been kind to NABJ. Because of a principled stance, we forged high standards.

By not wavering, we multiplied. In time we carefully made a way to include professors and free-lance journalists as voting members. Many people who were angry with us, returned on our terms.

Now we face a new challenge. The technological age is here. It is not an abstraction. Ignore it and do so at our peril. If 21st century journalists will

be "content providers" in cyberspace, let's make sure what remains important is what is in their heads, hearts and soul. Those essential elements count way more than any than any fancy tools at their disposal.

Why join NABJ? For starters . . .

By **Lewis W. Diuguid**

KANSAS CITY - One of the silliest anyone

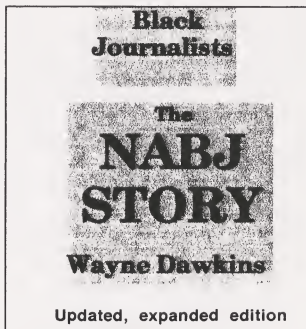
has ever said to me about membership in the National Association of Black Journalists is "Why should I bother? I'm already black and I'm a journalist too."

That's about as silly as some of the white people who phone my column feedback line saying such organizations saying such organizations should not exist. They ask, "How would you feel if there was a National Association of White Journalists?"

They, like some of our confused black brethren, don't have a clue. Those white callers who have the courage to leave a return number get an explanation from me: An NAWJ is what many journalism organizations are. Black people have a minor voice in them.

But NABJ is our own, where we as African-Americans have a voice that speaks effectively for us in situations that are unique to people like us. But membership in NABJ is deeper than skin color and has more depth than the profession of journalism would otherwise allow. . . NABJ provides an outlet for black journalists that lets them know more than anything else that they are not, and will never be, alone. In this business, that a bargain for only \$60.

Condensed and reprinted from the Region 8 Report. The writer is associate editor and columnist with the Kansas City Star.



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Black Alumni Network Newsletter

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 contributing editors
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People

James McBride, '80, is co-writing an autobiography of Quincy Jones. McBride is about a quarter of the way into the two-year project with Doubleday. McBride met Q while participating on a musical theater panel. "He heard of my book (*The Color of Water*, 1996) and he liked my music and the book," McBride explained. From there Q tapped him to help write his story. **Cheryl Davis, '86**, lawyer and playwright. She is a lawyer with Menaker and Hermann in New York City. Her play "The Color of Justice" is a fixture of the Theatreworks childrens series in Manhattan. Davis is at work on two musicals set during the Civil War and the 1960s . . . The quarterly J-school Journal noted these alumni were working at *Institutional Investor*: **Milton Allimadi, '92** and **Mana L. Kasongo, '96**. **Tania Padgett, '95**, is at *American Banker* covering bank stocks and fixed income products. . . Pulitzer participation: **Mira Thomas, '88**, is a copy editor and part of the *Newsday* news team that produced award-winning coverage of the TWA Flight 800 disaster. **E.R. Shipp, '79**, was a juror on the editorial writing panel. She was a '96 winner for commentary at the New York Daily News. . . . **Betty Winston Baye, '80**, rarely, if ever, missed an NABJ convention since 1981. This she will because she plans to be overseas in Ghana for three weeks. Last month Baye of *The Courier-Journal* in Louisville, Ky. was among the dozen Trotter Group columnists who met a second time with President Bill Clinton at the White House. They met days before the president gave his speech in San Diego on race relations.

— Let us know what you are doing and when you move. Send items and photos.

Budget Update

Balance before Jan 1997 issue	\$ -40
Revenues, Dec. 16 to June 15, 1997	437
Subtotal	397
Expenses: printing, postage, Jan. to June 1997	529
Balance before July 1997 issue	\$ -132

Advertisers:

The deadline to reserve space is the 15th of the month.

- Eighth page **\$75**
(two insertions, \$125);
- quarter page **\$125**
(two insertions \$200).

Chicago convention

Continued from front page

dropped the commentaries too after delivering two.

The vacuum paved the way for early evening anchor Warner Saunders to move up. He dropped out of the race for NABJ president in May, citing added responsibility at his day job.

The curse?

With the top job handed to Vanessa Williams without challenge, will she overcome the curse?

Arthur Fennell assumed the presidency without competition, the first time in 14 years (the 1979-81 presidency was the last official uncontested election).

The Morris Memo, an industry newsletter, said Williams "will inherit most of the do-nothing, big-spending, Fennell administration when she takes office."

Lack of a clear challenge to Fennell's vision left the Philadelphia TV journalist open to broadsides. But, no other member stepped forward to run in '95, so are most of the criticisms of the outgoing president fair?

The board as been at odds with a few dozen members who criticized decisions to destroy meeting records and were appalled by heavy handed management of the redesigned *NABJ Journal*.

The Morris Memo calls the coming election of an associate and student member to the board "convoluted," because the board appoints the representatives instead of by the vote in the other races.

Vanessa Williams was characterized as forthright, outspoken, cold and abrasive in an *NABJ Journal* profile.

Williams defines herself as direct and honest. "I've gotten better," she said about knocks that she can be impatient, volatile and sharp tongued.

She will need every ounce of patience and guile to lead a growing association that is dynamic but has weak spots that must be fixed.

Class assignment

Looks like the NABJ board heard and acted on complaints that the DuBois lecture was being trivialized.

Last year Michael Eric Dyson (author of *Race Rules* and University of North Carolina professor) wowed a small but engaged audience who showed up at 8 a.m. to hear him lecture.

This year's DuBois lecturer gets a better time slot, 9 a.m. He is Rutgers University professor David Levering Lewis, author of *DuBois: Biography of a Race*, Vol. I (1863-1919), which won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

How many NABJ members will read some, most or all of the book before the address?

Maynard Institute editing, management programs

OAKLAND, Calif. - This is the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education 1997 schedule.

- Digital Editing and Design will be conducted August 14-15 at the Asian American Journalists convention in Boston. July 14 is the application deadline.
 - Multimedia reporting forum, Sep. 25-27. San Francisco Bay Area. Application deadline is Aug. 25.
 - Executive Leadership Forum, Aug. 27-29, Northwestern University. Application deadline July 28.
 - Team Management, August 25-29 conducted at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Convention, Chicago. Application deadline is July 24.
- Write to 1211 Preservation Parkway, Oakland, CA 94612. Or call (510) 891-9202, fax (510) 891-9565.

Breaking Through, Inc., a new company formed by news manager Sidmel Estes-Sumpter of WAGA-TV in Atlanta and correspondent Sheila Stainback of CNBC in New York, is assisting news organizations who are interested in placing African American writers, producers and assignment editors in their newsrooms. (404)294-1021.

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Black Alumni Network

Newsletter

Volume 17, No. 8
AUGUST 1997

DuBois lecture

If W.E.B. DuBois were alive it likely he would cast President Clinton as an actor in a "theater of the absurd," Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer David Levering Lewis told about 75 NABJ members July 19.

Lewis answered a question about Clinton's claim that his push for honest, open discussion about race relations could be the "third great American Revolution."

Said Lewis, "Clinton makes passionate eloquent speeches to the people who are the problem. He is preaching to the converted."

Lewis, distinguished professor of history at Rutgers University, was this year's WEB DuBois speaker. Lewis wrote *WEB DuBois: Biography of a Race, Vol. I* (1868-1919) in 1993. It covered the first 50 years of the scholar's life. It received the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Lewis is working to complete volume II, covering 1920 to 1963. DuBois died in Ghana at age 95 during the week of the March on Washington.

During a 45 minute lecture and about 20 minutes of questions Lewis said:

- DuBois tried many strategies including scholarship, journalism and propaganda to promote the interests of black Americans.

- During many evolutions of DuBois development, 1935-1948 was a period of "talented tenth Marxism mixed with liberal optimism."

- DuBois' Harvard peer, journalist William Monroe Trotter, "jump-started DuBois public career" by forcing him off the fence to confront the accommodationist political

Continued on back page

Record convention in Chicago

**New attendance high;
Clinton addresses NABJ**

By Wayne Dawkins

CHICAGO - An in-person address by Bill Clinton, the first to the National Association of Black Journalists by a sitting U.S. President.

An earnest plea from just-released political prisoner Geronimo Pratt to fight for justice.

A record crowd - 3,300 people - at least 50 percent more than last year's convention, setting an association record.

The 22nd convention July 16-20 was huge, frequently too overwhelming for participants to hold on to.

The national office in College Park, Md. said the count eclipsed the 2,500 who came to Philadelphia in 1995. Attendance also topped at least 3,000 NABJ participants who were the largest delegation of Unity '94 in Atlanta with Hispanic, Asian and Native American journalists.

On Saturday night Arthur Fennell of WCAU-NBC TV in Philadelphia passed the leadership of NABJ to Vanessa Williams of *The Washington Post*. The vice-president/print and longtime board member promised a 1997-99 administration of "Straight talk, hard work and no bull (expletive).

"I am grateful, I am humble and I am ready. Our race is now beginning.

"NABJ must secure its place in cyberspace. We must push the

industry. We will not wait for ASNE (editors), RTNDA (news directors) or NAA (publishers) to set an agenda for our future.

"We will establish an NABJ Institute and bury the lie that qualified black journalists can't be found." Two thousand people applauded in the ban-quet hall at the Hyatt Regency.

Williams' remark about the institute was poignant because its current fate was decided by 50 members who participated in a sparsely attended but contentious business meeting Friday morning.

Plans to move the media institute forward were tabled when members voted 23-18 to require the board to make a 70-page strategic plan available to members. Fennell and other executive board members said they did not have the plan at the meeting.

Members also voted 37-2 with six abstentions to end the practice of erasing tapes of board meeting action.

"If a school board did this we would be all over them, said former president (1989-91) and treasurer Tom Morgan. Before the vote he urged the end of the procedure because "we are journalists, not lawyers. We pay lawyers to keep us out of trouble."

Williams was elected president with no opposition. Challenger Warner Saunders, host president of the Chicago ABJ, bowed out last spring.

In contested races, Robin Stone of *The New York Times* was elected vice president/print 441-347 over Dwight Lewis of the Nashville *Tennessean*.

Continued on next page

Record convention

Continued from front page

For parliamentarian Robin Washington of the *Boston Herald* edged out Roland Martin of KKDA radio in Grand Prairie, Texas 363-359. In the only contested regional director race, Roxanne Jones of the New York *Daily News* defeated incumbent Mark Griffith of CBS News 110-55 for the right to represent New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Voter participation was about 47 percent of 1,700 working journalists who were eligible. Nearly half of those who voted voted absentee.

President Clinton

The president spoke July 17, hours after addressing the NAACP convention in Pittsburgh. He was warmly received. He solicited black journalists' help in bridging the racial divide in the USA.

"If you look through all of human history," said Clinton, "societies have been defined by people in coherent units who pit themselves against one another. We shouldn't kid ourselves. This is not an easy task, but there is hardly anything more important."

Four black journalists, including a college student asked Clinton one question each. One from a San Francisco radio reporter was about what can be done about the dismantling of affirmative action in higher education, specifically Proposition 209 in California.

Clinton said he hoped to find a way to restore the programs. "There may be some ways to get around it," said Clinton, "I think if we work on it we can reverse it in a couple of years."

Some NABJ members, the general media and consumers were perplexed that none of the four questions was about the debate on whether white U.S. political leadership should apologize to African-Americans for two centuries of slavery and its residual impact 130 years after the 1860s.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported the next day that the question was anticipated but not asked. Some

NABJ members of the Trotter Group — black columnists who met twice with Clinton at the White House in 1996 and last spring — were beside themselves. They concluded that the

inter-viewers did not prepare well.

Immediately after the president's visit a few members interviewed at random were mixed on the relevance of the slavery apology question.

"I was surprised that they did not ask it," said Lisa Dandridge of WREG-TV3 in Memphis. "I thought at NABJ, that would be the question that we would ask. I'm not disappointed but I'm shocked it didn't come up."

'Straight talk, hard work, no bull----'

— incoming president Vanessa Williams' pledge to members

David Pollard of the *Chillicothe Gazette* (Ohio) said "I think it's kind of silly to ask one man to apologize for something that happened for 400 years. I think it's about time a president brought up the race issue and said we need to talk about it." This was a reference to the race relations commission Clinton appointed that is led by African-American historian John Hope Franklin.

Five hours before Clinton addressed NABJ Washington, D.C. radio host and activist Joe Madison said "If the president wants to apologize (for slavery) have him apologize for a U.S. that culturally conditioned itself to believe that black people are inferior." Madison accepted an NABJ service award on behalf of Gary Webb, the *San Jose Mercury News* reporter who wrote a series last summer on a possible link between crack cocaine smuggling into minority communities that subsidized guerrilla wars in Central America, conducted as the CIA looked the other way. The series was ridiculed by some of the major media and it sent a jolt through large segments of the black community, who demanded vigorous investigation.

Sen. Moseley-Braun

U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley Braun, D-Ill., was politely received at the closing banquet July 19. Congress' only African-American senator has had an embattled first term that included an ill-advised trip to Nigeria to meet with leaders who canceled democratic elections and executed opposition leaders. In her address she made a plea to advocate for the interests of young Americans in a climate of social program cutting. "Welfare became a code word for race that corrupted the debate, no matter that the facts contradicted the assumptions," she said. "We're hurting children hostage. The national commitment to the poor has ended," said Moseley-Braun, dissatisfied with the final drafts for welfare reform.

Regarding the media industry, the senator told NABJ members that in a whirlwind of legislation this year, minority ownership of broadcast properties fell from 2.5 percent to 0.5 percent because of changes in the broadcast certificate program.

"The optimistic vision of the generation before us," said Moseley-Braun need not be lost. It's our patriotic duty that our children do better than we. . . . Our generation must be creative and disciplined," and not succumb to pessimism.

Black Journalists The NABJ STORY Wayne Dawkins

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Jobline

The 102-year-old (*Sumter, S.C.*) *Item*, (24,000 circulation) and the flagship publication of Osteen Publishing Co., is looking for a few good reporters. *Sumter* is big enough to be a metropolitan statistical area, but small enough so you don't get lost. There's plenty of opportunity here to wrack up some good clips, get some good solid real-world training and move onward and upward. Contact: Billy Quarles, managing editor, The Item, P.O. 1677, Sumter, SC 29150 (803) 775-6331; Fax: 775-1024. . . MIT News Office seeks a science writer, a senior writer and a writer/public relations associate to cover MIT news for the national and local media and write for the 20,000 circulation weekly newspaper, MIT Tech Talk. Send letter, resume and one writing sample to Jennifer Walsh, MIT Personnel Office, P.O. Box 391229, Cambridge, MA 02139-0013.

Salute to excellence

CHICAGO — Less was more. A scaled down "Salute to Excellence" awards program was held in a cabaret-like venue, Park West, and was near capacity, several hundred people.

Award presentations moved quickly, unlike recent years when excess turned people off and away.

Even the entertainment worked. Six Bryant Ballet dancers emerged from darkness then mist to open the program. At the midpoint Toronto pop star Deborah Cox sang "Sentimental" for a grooving NABJ crowd.

Cox flirted with the teen-age male escorts who almost melted off stage, much to the amusement of the crowd.

USA TODAY correspondent Gary Fields received the Journalist of the

Year award for exhaustive coverage of the burnings of dozens of black churches in the South.

"The amount of history you lose if a 100-year-old church burns is tremendous, not to mention the disconnect," said Fields. "When churches are gone, the center place is gone."

The lifetime achievement winner was Samuel L. Adams, associate professor of journalism at the University of Kansas since 1973 and curator of the Ida B. Wells Award.

"My greatest accomplishment is keeping the faith and overcoming obstacles that were usually placed there because of race," said Adams. "If you are going to conquer the tiger you must first know his ways."

The Percy Qoboza winner for international journalism was Marie-Roger Bilou, director general of Paris-based *AFRICA International* magazine. The Cameroon native said her magazine began with a cover story on the first Africa-African American summit in 1993 in

Continued on back page

Next month:

B.A.N. People and Wayne's commentary returns; more convention news.

Networking: Dozens of Columbia Journalism Alumni attended the Chicago convention. Here's where you can find a few of them . . .

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DuBois lecture

Continued from front page

strategy of Booker T. Washington.

Trotter's *Guardian* newspaper was "reckless as it was principled," said Lewis and DuBois and Trotter "were under the rubric of principled journalism, regardless of the risks.

- The proposal that the U.S. Census bureau add a biracial category to count Americans seems "harmless" but he was aware that politicians feared losing a percentage of their followers.

David Levering Lewis said African-Americans need to be "more ecumenical" when debating because unlike the past when many positions were clear, current debate in the black community is fragmented.

"Do we go it alone or in coalitions?" Lewis asked. "The fact that we pose more questions means there will be more answers for them."

— Wayne Dawkins

NABJ Workshop

Opinion pages:

Power to persuade

Eighteen 8 a.m. July 17 workshops included "The opinion pages: Power and persuasion." The panelists included African-Americans who are editorial page editors of major daily newspapers (Don Wycliff, *Chicago Tribune* and Janet Clayton, *Los Angeles Times*).

In the audience of 17 people sat editorial page editors Morris Thompson, *Philadelphia Daily News* and Jacqueline Thomas, who late last spring became editorial page editor of the *Baltimore Sun*.

Harold Jackson of the *Baltimore Sun*, a Pulitzer Prize and NABJ Journalist of the year, sat in the crowd. About a third of the audience were reporters and other news people eager to learn about the editorial process. Instead of a lecture the 90-minute session was largely a collegial discussion.

The Los Angeles and Chicago editorial boards were similar in size (about a dozen) and frequency in which they meet to discuss and choose topics to write about (five weekly).

Panelist Sandra Combs Birdette of the *Oakland, Mich. Press* (90,000 circulation) said the board members sign their names to editorials so readers know who to respond to on specific topics.

It hasn't stopped some callers from calling Birdette to rage about another colleague's work.

There was lengthy discussion about letters to the editor and how to encourage African-Americans to write routinely.

Lovell Beaulieu of the *Des Moines Register* (190,000 circulation) said his paper receives 12,000 letters a year and it prints about a quarter of them or 15 a day.

Clayton said this about the lack of letters by blacks:

"They don't understand the process and we don't explain the process. But blacks write letters about what they want to write about," citing a bushel that came regarding Mike Tyson and the "Boys in the 'hood'" theme in movies.

Wayne Dawkins, '80, a member of the NABJ Journal editorial board which includes J-alumni Betty Winston Baye, '80 and Gayle Pollard, '73, moderated the panel.

Salute to excellence

Continued from page 3

Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Circulation is 100,000 and readership is 500,000.

A sour note in a mostly upbeat awards program was the ironic success of BET News, with the winners accepting a handful of prizes then noting that the network canceled its news programming.

— Wayne Dawkins

Black Alumni Network Newsletter

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Black Alumni Network

Newsletter

Web catches new grads
page 2

Volume 17, No. 9
SEPTEMBER 1997

We all went tabloid

Lingering too luridly at the Cunanan-Versace spectacle

MIAMI — It was a week during which Woolworth's, a retail institution woven into the fabric of American life (and in a particular, bittersweet way, African-American life), announced the closing of its last 400 five-and-dimes.

In almost any other summer, that fact might have afforded news organizations the opportunity for those historical nostalgic features we always claim to want to produce.

But in mid-July 1997, that wasn't about to happen. The news media was fixated on the murder of a fashion designer whose peculiar talent was to elevate the streetwalker aesthetic to haute couture.

Exhibit A: page 45 of the July 28 *New Yorker*, on which Salt 'n' Pepa and Cinderella model what can only be described as pastel leather lingerie by Gianni Versace.

On the day Versace was shot outside his Miami Beach mansion, I was covering the ground breaking class-action lawsuit that's pitted non-smoking flight attendants against the tobacco industry. This Miami trial had attracted sufficient media interest to warrant a sizable press room in the Dade County Courthouse. As I and my editor agreed over the phone that I should stay put at the trial and leave the Versace story to a host interview with a fashion writer, the other occupants of the press room — from the all-news radio rookie to the CNN senior correspondent — highlighted it

the murder scene. Within 15 minutes the only reporters left were the AP business writer assigned to the tobacco trial, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and me.

My news organization joined the others the following day, as the gay-gigolo-serial killer angle came into focus. Our ostensible motive for



Cheryl Devall
Miami Splice

diving in was that we had covered some of fugitive Andrew Cunanan's previous alleged activity — notably the murder of millionaire Chicago developer Lee Miglin. The fact that the suspect was still on the loose constituted news.

My editor and I determined early that we'd stick only to that which we could verify. In this way we avoided tangents that turned out to be embarrassingly speculative or just plain false, including the HIV-positive avenger angle, the eccentric German houseboat owner angle and the most of the "is-Cunanan-in-the-houseboat-or-isn't-he" standoff that tied up Miami Beach traffic for hours.

As did everyone else, my network went into a kind of overdrive, reporting on the Elvis-like Cunanan sightings around the nation, lingering a little too luridly on the gay demimonde elements of the

Continued . page 3

A black and white movie experience

By E.R. Shipp

It was just a movie — or so I thought as I scrounged up tickets to a special screening of "Soul Food" during the convention of the National Association of Black Journalists in Chicago.

But "Soul Food" became a lesson in how cultural differences pose challenges that are difficult for even professional communicators to overcome. It was a sobering reminder of the distortions that can transpire when we, the journalists, take it upon ourselves to interpret the world but do so through different prisms.

"Soul Food," scheduled to open in theaters this fall, is a comedy-drama about a family that has observed a 40-year tradition of elaborate Sunday dinners at the home of the matriarch, Mother Joe. Then tragedy strikes, and in scenes both humorous and poignant enough to force a few macho guys in the audience to grab the hankies, the question becomes whether the Sunday dinner — and the family — will survive.

If you've never been to a movie with a black audience, then you've missed a truly interactive, communal experience. Blacks talk back to the characters on the screen. The audience on masse laughs, screams, roots for the good guys, boos the bads guys.

Accompanying me at "Soul Food" were two recent graduates of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, where I teach. Wendell, who is black, fell right into the spirit of the evening, as did I. Mark, who is white, was a bit

Continued on back page

Web snares new graduates

**But traditional media
opportunities remain strong**

The 1996 Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates, conducted by the Ohio State University, was released last month.

Project co-directors Lee B. Becker and Gerald M. Kosicki said the labor market for graduates was generally favorable in 1996-97.

Salaries were up slightly, as was the availability of benefits.

For the first time this years survey reported that online publishing was a factor in employment.

Highlights of the report:

- The percentage of graduates reporting they had at least one job offer or solid prospect went up in 1996 over a year ago, as did the mean number of such jobs available.
- The percentage of bachelor's degree recipients who reported holding a full-time job six to eight months after graduation in 1996 was near the level of full-time employment in 1988 and 1989 – the peak for this measure in recent years.
- The percentage of master's degree recipients with full-time work was lower in 1996 than in 1995 and the actual percentage of those with part-time work increased.
- Salaries received by journalism and mass communication graduates with full-time jobs in 1996 were higher than those received by graduates in 1995. The increase, in the case of master's degree recipients, the increase was below what was needed to overcome the adverse effects of inflation.
- In terms of availability, at least, the 1996 graduates made gains in the area of benefits.
- Graduates of journalism and mass communication programs continue to look for work in traditional places – with newspapers, with broadcasters, in public relations and advertising.

Continued on back page

Related, but not the same

Are affirmative action and diversity the same?

Both terms were used interchangeably last month to define

WAYNE DAWKINS Commentary

policy decisions that could have a profound effect for decades on race relations and African-American progress.

Policy makers and watchers from President Clinton to the pundit press were using "affirmative action" and "diversity" interchangeably the same way many people morph "racism" and "bigotry."

Both sets of terms are similar but not the same.

Many of us need to step forward and demand precision in the debate. Sit on the sideline a day too long and risk being left out of the game.

To recap here's what happened the week of Aug. 18-22.

- The Clinton administration agreed to let white women participate in the minority business program of the Small Business Administration.
- Charles Krauthammer's Washington Post column called the SBA case a setback for blacks. The diversity approach undermines affirmative action, ergo, blacks' program.
- The Clinton administration did a double flip according to at least one news account and said it now agreed with a high court ruling that a New Jersey school district erred in choosing a black teacher over an equally qualified white one because it was promoting "diversity."
- Also, a Boston Globe column by Jeff Jacoby contended quite disingenuously that "Affirmative action can be deadly" because 20 years after graduating from the University of California class that rejected white med school applicant Alan Bakke a black doctor, Patrice Chavis, was sued for malpractice in a cosmetic surgery death.

Bakke was synonymous with with

the so-called "reverse discrimination" challenge to affirmative action.

Dr. Chavis, by the way, was a fine physician for many years but got into trouble after recently changing specialties in an attempt to make more money.

What's been forgotten is affirmative action programs only help get minorities in the door.

Once in, they must still work and study hard to succeed.

Workplace "diversity" is not "affirmative action"; it's the upgrade.

Once you have qualified and experienced minorities in the office what is done with them?

They're beyond the happy-to-be-here mode of getting inside. Many of them want to be supervisors, managers, specialists.

Companies foolish enough not to get their money's worth from this pool of talent will lose a competitive edge in business or serve the public shoddily in government.

Affirmative action is akin to entry-level work and training; diversity is akin to promoting and seasoning.

The words are first cousins, not identical twins.

Interchanging the concepts is a recipe confusing the emotional mix of race, gender and work.

Black Journalists The NABJ STORY Wayne Dawkins

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Tabloid

Continued

story. One of our most distinguished foreign correspondents, Sylvia Poggioli, filed a report from Milan on the celebrity-studded Versace memorial Mass. I attempted, with mixed success, to convey the atmosphere outside the Versace mansion, where an impromptu shrine had sprouted and a dozen TV satellite trucks were deployed across the street.

Here follows **Exhibit B**, a portion of my second-day script for *All Things Considered*:

"On the marble steps of the mansion, three armed guards kept watch as a stream of visitors from many nations passed by on bicycled and in-line skates, in cars and on foot. There were handwritten notes and flowers and votive candles piled where Versace was gunned down, as well as the front page of today's Miami Herald with its banner headline: **STYLISH LIFE BRUTAL DEATH.**"

This was a story perhaps best suited for *Entertainment Tonight* or *Inside Edition*, and many of the sorrowful and curious at the scene understood that. There was a local fashion designer with his adorably turned out baby daughter who, after I finished interviewing him, worked the crowd for other reporters to who he could offer his precise, tearful appreciation of the man he called his idol. There was a couple which, according to *Miami New Times*, deliberately stood in CNN live shots and called friends on a cellular phone telling them to tune in.

There was the fringe of hangers-on, including out-of-town tourists, by the media encampment across from the now-notorious houseboat hideout, waiting until dawn for law enforcement officials to confirm that Andrew Cunanan had indeed killed himself inside.

During the Q & A that followed, against a backdrop of dramatically floodlit palm trees in a rosy Florida

sunrise, some of these bystanders were shouting questions to the police, home video cameras in hand.

As this story unfolded, I had the eerie sense that half of the known world was reporting this story while the other half was eager to use it as a launching pad to fame.

After eight nights of going to bed not quite knowing whether the phone would ring in the middle of the night with word of Cunanan's capture, I felt little vindication when police finally identified the body. A bright but troubled young man who had senselessly ended several other lives finally took his own, desperate and alone. Nobody won.

During the week in which Gianni Versace was shot, there were 17 other homicides in Dade County – the highest weekly count in six years, police said.

While I regret that a man – even a rich and famous one – couldn't walk to the newsstand and back home without getting killed, I can't help but wonder whether the massive police response to this one case may have created the opportunity for any of those other murders to take place.

Or, whether absent the massive media attention to this one case, any of those other cases will ever be solved.

The writer, J-'82, is a correspondent for National Public Radio.

Jobline

MIT News Office seeks a **science writer**, a **senior writer** and a **writer/public relations associate** to cover MIT news for the national and local media and write for the 20,000 circulation weekly newspaper, MIT Tech Talk. Send letter, resume and one writing sample to Jennifer Walsh, MIT Personnel Office, P.O. Box 391229, Cambridge, MA 02139-0013.

People

Oscar, the sportswriters quarterly, is a magazine about sportswriters produced by sportswriters. **Rob Parker**, '88, a *Newsday* sports

columnist, is the editor and publisher. "For years, we have been forgotten, neglected," said Parker. "So many journalism magazines only covered city-side's news and trends. We were simply not taken seriously. In this magazine, it's all about us." The *Oscar* name honors "The Odd Couple" sports columnist Oscar Madison. It premiered last



spring with the baseball writers issue. Football writers are to be featured in the forthcoming issue. Subscriptions are \$10 payable to R. Parker Publishing, Inc., 90-40 160th St., Jamaica, NY 11432. Or call (718)658-8331. . . **Frank McCoy**, '85, was a winner of an Ethel L. Payne award for Africa coverage. The inaugural awards were presented this summer in Zimbabwe at the time of the Africa-African American Summit. McCoy is an editor with *Our World News* on the Internet (www.ourworldnews.com). . . **A'lelia Bundles**, '76, deputy Washington bureau chief for ABC News, was a guest analyst on CNN "Informed Sources." The Aug. 24 show discussed the study by a Yale professor that said the major media over represents African-Americans as poor. African-Americans are 29 percent of the U.S. poor but were depicted in 65 percent of magazine reports and 62 percent of broadcasts.

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Soul Food

continued

taken aback, especially at a scene in which the haughty character played by Vanessa Williams loses her ice princess cool and, at a family party, goes after her philandering husband with a knife. The audience whooped it up, laughed, applauded and egged her on. Mark was perplexed – and appalled.

The Vanessa Williams character, a successful lawyer, having been forced to come off her high horse and finally demonstrate passion about something other than her career, had done so in a quintessentially low brow manner. It seemed fairly clear to me, given the tone and texture of the rest of the film, that there would be no actual violence. And there wasn't.

But where we saw a funny scene, Mark, already discombobulated by the interactive experience, saw black people cheering for a violent act. When he and Wendell discussed this among themselves and later brought me into the debate, it was as if they'd seen two different movies with two different audiences. Neither could fathom the other's reaction.

This may seem trivial, but consider that these two men, armed with the master's degrees awarded to them in May, are about to begin interpreting the world for readers (Mark) and viewers (Wendell). And they couldn't even agree on what happened at a movie!

One might have produced a story about the good time had by all; the other, a piece on the callous attitude of blacks toward domestic violence. And neither would have conveyed the whole story.

That journalists of different racial

That journalists of different racial or cultural back-grounds can view the same thing so differently only proves that they are like most people. But the consequences are more far reaching.

or cultural backgrounds can view the same thing so differently only proves that they are like most

J-graduate hiring

Continued

- Daily newspapers, television, advertising and public relations agencies continue to be the major employers of journalism and mass communications bachelor's degree recipients.
- The experience of the 1996 graduates suggests 1996 was the year the web started to make a measurable difference – if only, at that time, a small one.

About 62 percent of the people surveyed were women and 18 percent of the sample were minorities. About 450 colleges and universities were part of the survey.

people. But the consequences are more far reaching.

Yet at a time when greater diversity of the journalistic workforce is demanded to reflect these varied perspectives, there's been a slight decline in the number of black reporters and editors at newspapers, as well as in the number of stories by minority reporters that make it onto television.

Employers must do a better job of recruiting and retaining people of color. News consumers – that means you, dear readers – must make your voices heard, demanding that your perspective be reflected in the mix. Because most of the time, you know, what's in question is not just a movie.

This column originally appeared in the *New York Daily News*. The writer is a 1979 Columbia University Journalism Graduate.

People

Continued

The study was based on a four year analysis of coverage in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report* and ABC, NBC and CBS. A'Lehia, asked the host, what do you make of the study and the indictment? "Well, you know, I was actually glad that the study finally came out because I've worked in television for 20 years and I've always had this sense that African-Americans were disproportionately represented in crime and in poverty and that it does affect public policy."

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Black Alumni Network

Newsletter

Volume 17, No. 10
OCTOBER 1997

Strategic plan delivered to members

Blueprint to manage growth

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — The National Association of Black Journalists released a summary of its strategic plan and proposed institute.

President Vanessa Williams said the September release answered action at the July business meeting. Members voted 23-18 that the board of directors table action on the strategic plan and institute until it provided reports to the membership.

"We agree that the board has a responsibility to keep the membership apprised of actions taken on the organization's behalf," said Williams, a *Washington Post* reporter. "We also trust the membership agrees that these two initiatives are crucial to the continued growth and progress of NABJ."

Two months before its 22nd birthday, NABJ has grown from 44 founders in 1975 to several hundred members in the early 1980s, about 2,000 in the early 1990s to nearly 3,000 full, associate and student members to date.

The strategic plan studies 10 areas in which the 17-member board and staff is to improve planning, implement programs and services and ensure financial stability.

Continued on back page

It ain't easy being Ghana

Nevertheless, earnestness, enthusiasm abounds

Excerpt

This appeared in the first of three essays that appeared in The Courier-Journal (Louisville, Ky.) Sept. 14, 16 and 18. The writer is a 1980 Columbia Journalism graduate.

By **Betty Winston Baye**
Ghanaian journalist Kabral Blay-Amihene and Philip Bummi Aborisade, a Nigerian journalist-in-exile in Ghana, have a routine in which they look at each other, smile and say, "It's not easy."

A pretty accurate description of how I found daily life this summer during the three weeks I spent in the Republic of Ghana.

Matter of fact, I returned from West Africa determined never again to complain about hard work.

Hard work is that done by Ghanaian coal peddlers, whose days are spent bent over and sifting through mountains of black nuggets along the streets of Accra.

Ghanaian market women work hard too. Their hours of haggling produce stacks of Ghanaian currency, cedis, that are so devalued that at day's end there isn't much to speak of.

Hard work is rural women toting babies on their backs and water or stacks of firewood atop their heads.

It's 9-year-old Ebenezer, of



Betty Winston Baye

Tamale, who craves education so desperately that he leaves home at 4:30 a.m. to walk miles to school.

Hard work is reaping harvest with machetes, and building roads with nothing but picks and shovels.

FRANKLY, I was impressed by the Ghanaian journalists I met in the private press — and the government press during a tour of the pro-government newspaper, *The Daily Graphic*. Particularly impressive, however are the journalists who are so dedicated that they work without typewriters, and write their stories longhand on strips of newsprint.

Kabral's passion is to develop in West Africa a "serious press," a press he

Continued on back page

What do you mean 'we'?

I was working my Saturday night Aug. 30 shift when word came that Prince Diana (Spencer) was critically injured during a high-speed chase in Paris.

A newsroom **WAYNE** that already was **DAWKINS** humming along **Commentary**

45 minutes before the first of three edition deadlines now shifted into overdrive to make room for a huge page-one story.

It was if a large hand swept across a table and scraped the dishes off to make way for a substitute order.

We tuned in to CNN and searched our electronic library to see if any Northwest Indiana people had a brush with Diana.

When I left work Diana was critical and her new boyfriend Dodi al-Fayed was dead. When I got home the bulletin was Diana died.

Of course you know what followed: Saturation coverage of the fatal accident in a wet and winding Parisian tunnel.

The story evolved and and showcased many angles:

- The paparazzi jackals who chased Diana and Dodi to their deaths;
- The limousine driver not qualified to stand in, who was high and who may have taunted motorcycle madmen paparazzi to chase the car.
- There was the Diana the humanitarian and woman of grace theme.

As the press was were in the cycle of all-things-Diana some of the reporting and analyzing bothered me.

A few times on television and probably in print newspeople said "we" were enthralled with Diana and her every movement.

What do you mean "we"?

I felt uneasy about journalists framing questions (or statements) with "we" the same way colleague friends question whether it is appropriate to say why did "we" (as if journalists are government decision makers) bomb Iraq or send soldiers to Somalia or Serbia.

Were journalists trying to hide, disguise, a necessary degree of detachment from the Diana story?

I didn't have the "we" feeling. That drew boos in my home and calls from some colleague friends to lighten up.

I hadn't thought much about Diana before the crash. I was sorry she died like many good or young people who die too soon.

I recalled stories that she was frolicking with al-Fayed, zeroing in a few weeks earlier on stories that British tabloids may have run photographs altering the placement of the playboy's hands on the princess.

Before that, the British royals struck me as silly. They're a dysfunctional family forced on many readers and listeners.

Unlike other countries British royals don't seem to have any political authority. What is their purpose in the 1990s?

Diana Spencer was a pretty young thing selected to breed the Royals a few heirs. Then she was kicked to the curb by Prince Charles and the rest of that mamas boy's family.

Maybe what grabbed many royal watchers was Diana's

savvy. She couldn't take Charles' fooling around. Instead of following tradition and suffering quietly she used the press to tell the world she was living with dog who was part of a zoo.

Later, the same cameras that stalked her at parties and the beach were used to show Diana advocating to help suffering children in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.

Shortly before her shocking death, Diana was making effective use of her time.

But was she a great humanitarian bordering on sainthood?

It seemed that was from all the coverage of the crash the outpouring of grief and the huge funeral a week later.

Later in the week Mother Teresa of Calcutta dies. Did the Creator throw everyone a curve? People had to straighten up and get a grip.

An undisputable woman of grace and giving for nearly a century was gone. Would she be honored appropriately?

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Jobline

The National Association of Black Journalists seeks a **director of communications**. The director serves as editor-in-chief of association publications including but not limited to the monthly newsletter, annual report, membership directory and convention program book. The director serves as managing editor of the quarterly magazine (Since summer 1996 the NABJ Journal has been a bimonthly magazine; from 1987-96 it was a tabloid-size newspaper published 10 times monthly) working closely with the volunteer editor and editorial board. The director's other responsibilities include media relations and On-line services. Experience required: Minimum eight years as a reporter or editor and experience developing and implementing communications strategies. Salary range: \$45,000-\$50,000 plus benefits. Send cover letter and resume to Jo Anne Lyons

Wooten, executive director, NABJ c/o University of Maryland, 3100 Taliaferro Hall, College Park, Md. 20742. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. . . . WHY TV 12 & 91 FM announced these openings: **Associate director**, Delaware Operations Center, Wilmington; **announcer/host**, Radio for evening through early-morning shift, and **marketing representative** to research, cultivate and secure corporate sponsorship from area businesses and advertising agencies. Send resume to Deborah Palmer, director of human resources, WHY, Inc., 150 N. Sixth St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19106.

People

Jill Nelson, '80, this fall wrote her second book, *Straight, No Chaser: How I Became a Grown-Up Black Woman* (Putnam, \$22.95). The collection of essays on race, gender and political issues follows her memoir *Volunteer Slavery* (Nobel Press, 1993). *Straight No Chaser* is a Book-Of-the-Month Club selection. . . . **Valerie Wilson Wesley,**

'82, is back with her fourth mystery, *No Hiding Place* (Putnam), part of the Tamara Hayle mystery series. The former Newark cop and single mom turned private investigator is back on the case. *No Hiding Place* follows *When Death Comes Stealing*, *Devil's Gonna Get Him* and *Where Evil Sleeps*. . . . **Rita Thompson, '80**, left local TV news in New York City to be a field producer for the "Oprah Winfrey Show." Rita's in her second season with the Chicago-based show.

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Aim to change news media Oct. NYC meeting

The second annual Media & Democracy Congress is Thursday through Sunday Oct. 16-19 at New York University.

The host is the Institute for Alternative Journalism.

Diversity coordinator Nadya Tan said the Congress will feature dozens of presentations, panels and workshops aimed at sharpening skills and developing policy initiatives to restructure and democratize U.S. media.

Topics include:

- Investigative Reporting in Communities of Color;
- Insuring Public Space: Fighting for Public Access;
- Beyond Us and Them: Sex, Race and the Narrow Mind of the Media;
- Fighting Media Scapegoating: A Focus on Youth;
- The Impact of Media Consolidation on Journalism;
- Beyond Ellen: Media Literacy for the Queer Community;
- Staying on Message: Communicating Democratic Values.

Convention speakers include Ben Bagdikian, Farai Chideya, Barbara Ehrenreich, Marcia Ann Gillespie, William Greider, Michael Moore, Jill Nelson and Adolph Reed.

Last year's inaugural Congress in San Francisco attracted 600 people; 1,000 are expected this year, say the organizers.

For information, call (415) 284-1419; fax 284-1414; e-mail, congress@igc.org.

Strategic plan

Continued from front page

Here are the areas and highlights from 38 recommendations:

- **Finance:** More authority and autonomy shift from the treasurer to the executive director, including drafting and formation of the annual budget.
- **Fund raising:** Develop a group of national funders who will move with the annual convention from year to year.
- **Membership services:** Better market the association's programs to local and national members. Most members forget matching grants are available for chapters and an Infonet project and other programs exist.
- **Programs:** Increase community outreach programs such as Journalists Across America and urban journalism workshops
- **Chapter relations and support:** Immediately resume

the annual recertification process as called for in the constitution and operating procedures.

- **Office staff and structure:** As of June the association's \$1.5 million budget supported five full-time staff members. The American

Society of Association Executives recommends about a dozen full-time staff.

- **Board structure and governance:** Recommend a modified ladder system for NABJ executive officers and have staggered terms to ensure continuity in leadership.
- **Technology:** Already implemented are links from the NABJ home page to affiliate and student chapter web sites.
- **Marketing:** Enhance the marketing and sales of association identity items and create a catalog of the items.
- **NABJ Institute:** It would stand alone as dedicated to developing skills and leadership potential of African-American journalists and compiling, disseminating and chronicling information on African-Americans and the media industry. Five program areas include archives and entrepreneurial development.

Board reps named

In September, Linda Florence Callahan, a North Carolina A&T University professor, was named associate member representative to the NABJ board of directors. Also Cindy Lynette George, a junior and journalism major at the University of Florida, was named student representative.

It ain't easy being Ghana

Continued from front page

says, that will not be captive "to the minds of governments, to the whims and caprices of dictators and tyrants."

A radical concept indeed in Africa as each day's news brings reports of journalists being arrested for writing what government officials would prefer they not.

Ghana, of course, doesn't lack for U.S. and European influences, including private press journalists' ideas about press freedoms.

Ghana's official language is English, and tourism is encouraged. Also, countless Ghanaians are studying, traveling and living abroad and have developed tastes for things foreign that they import at home.

Don't be surprised if, while sitting in heavy traffic in Accra, which is just about always, you hear American rapper Tupac Shakur on the radio as often as Amakye Dede, a hugely popular Ghanaian entertainer.

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Black Alumni Network

Newsletter

Volume 17, No. 11
NOVEMBER 1997

Media & Democracy Congress attracts 1,200, organizers say

The second Media and Democracy Congress in New York City Oct. 16-19 attracted about 1,200 people from 38 U.S. states and seven countries, said the Institute for Alternative Journalism, the organizers.



"Most participants reported that the Congress succeeded in the ways we planned," said Don Hazen, IAJ executive director. "There was less 'navel gazing,' as some of our critics said last year. Much of the discussion focused on the range of strategies for holding the media accountable . . . to developing skills of reaching people through the mainstream media. On the goal strengthening alternative media, many other presentations concentrated on the desire to more effectively get messages out to a much broader constituency through collaborations, skill building and being more in touch with our audiences. Others were committed to

Continued on page 2

Trotter report

Columnists convene to sharpen craft and influence policy

By **Wayne Dawkins**

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The William Monroe Trotter Group, several dozen African-American newspaper columnists, returned to their founding home in late October to refine their craft and influence public policy.

Eighteen journalists formed the Trotter Group in Fall 1992 near Harvard University, Trotter's alma mater.

The Nieman Foundation, the journalist sabbatical program, was host last month.

At the Harvard Kennedy School of Government Arco Forum, nine Trotter members critiqued the Clinton race initiative before a packed auditorium of 300 people.

In November 1995 and June

1997 a dozen columnists interviewed President Clinton at the White House.

Here are observations from the Kennedy School session:

• The Clinton race initiative

Apology in order?

Commentary, page 2

could also be called "better living through denial" because it is nice words that lack action, said Lewis Diuguid of the *Kansas City Star*.

• "Racism exists at 30,000 feet but not on the ground," said Les Payne of *Newsday*, because whites including Clinton "can acknowledge racism but cannot name a white racist."

• "Black and white (relations),"

Continued on back page

Online vehicle for journalists roars along information superhighway

An online vehicle driven by National Association of Black Journalists members is the association LISTSERV.

Members send e-mail to NABJ@UMDD.UMD.EDU. This is called "sending mail to the list," said registration instructions, because mail is sent to a single address and LISTSERV makes copies for all the people who subscribe. At this writing 137 of the association's 3,000 members were on the list.

Many of them post job open-

ings. In late October members offered advice to black journalism students at Louisiana State University. LISTSERV users were told that LSU was not making a serious effort to let the NABJ student chapter function, despite interest by students. This was at the time accreditation representatives were examining the LSU School of Journalism. The writer from Baton Rouge who raised the issue said the J-school changed its attitude after NABJ took weighed in.

Slave legacy stokes passions now

SIX OF US panelists were asked a simple question: Was an apology by the United States for enslaving Africans in America from the 17th to late 19th century in order?

The answers – including mine – were unenthusiastic.

A government apology, I said, did not rank high on my priority list, especially if it were insincere.

WAYNE

DAWKINS

Commentary

Our answers were answered with unequivocal blasts from Trotter Group colleagues after we shared dinner with the 1997-98 class of Nieman fellows at Harvard.

Unequivocally, there should be an apology for slavery, we panelists were told.

Vernon Jarrett, the elder of the dissenters, was most bellicose: "I don't care if they don't mean it. I want the apology on the record."

The intensity and passion of the apology issue ate up the allotted time for about six questions on contemporary issues.

From my panel chair and on reflection during that sleepless night it was hard for me to tell whether my colleagues' return volleys were our usual robust critique or if they were shocked or disappointed in what the second round of panelists had to say. We worked in Baltimore, Syracuse, Nashville, Gary, Hartford and Fort Worth and were charged to do some follow up to the previous night's Harvard Kennedy School forum.

There, other colleagues dissected Clinton's race initiative.

For the most part Nieman fellows passed on asking questions. They watched quietly – stunned maybe – as a severe scolding was adminis-

tered within the Trotter family.

We moved on clumsily into the question, can bridges be built between blacks, whites, browns, yellows and reds?

Discussion of that topic – which I had strong feelings about – was blunted or repelled.

The controlling theme of the night was bringing closure to inequality and the question of respect between black and white. The other shades of the American mosaic might have to wait.

But press the government for an apology for slavery?

'I don't care if they don't mean it, I want the apology (for slavery) on the record.'

I was unenthusiastic because that is not good enough.

The United States has to do better than that.

What about apologizing for white supremacy?

What about lynchings and other barbarism post-slavery?

And will an apology stop Confederate apologists from cranking out new books every year refigiting the Civil War? I doubt it.

More valuable than an apology is getting Americans to understand the legacy of enslaving Africans here. That means a careful reading and reinterpretation of our history for the masses.

In a previous night's forum Jarrett made this memorable point: During slavery, 75 percent of Southern whites were *not* slave holders. They were dirt poor people propping up a small ruling elite.

That may surprise whites

who sport Confederate Crimson license plates and decals. Would they stay so strident if they understood they were oppressed too?

I take the damage wrought

The U.S. has to do better than that. What about apologizing for white supremacy?

by 212 years of American slavery very seriously.

If my words did not sound that way that night in Cambridge, Mass. I apologize.

I'm very sincere about that. But my attention is more committed to the current racial challenges, which are no longer two-toned but multi hued.

Black Journalists The NABJ STORY Wayne Dawkins

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Media & Democracy

continued

mentoring the next generation of progressive media practitioners and journalists." Hazen also said that:

- About 150 college and high school students attended; there was more programming aimed at diverse constituencies.
- Thirty percent of the speakers and 20 percent of the attendees were people of color.
- More than 125 scholarships were given, one third to people of color. Yet, many of the audiences for panels seemed overwhelming white, suggesting that the Congress discussion did not speak to everyone. Also, while half of the participants were women, 40 percent of the speakers were.
- Opinions expressed throughout the Congress ranged from radical to the progressive to some mainstream ideas.

Audio and video tapes of conference sessions are available. Also, *We the Media* (Free Press), writings by 100 Congress presenters.

To order visit the web site, <http://www.mediademocracy.org/congress/audiotape.html>. Or, write to IAJ, 77 Federal St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

Also overheard at the Trotter meeting:

- Sherman Miller, retired physicist who writes for a number of newspapers from Delaware, ran for lieutenant governor last year and earned 25 percent of the vote.
- Bill Turner of the *Winston-Salem Chronicle* attended Lynch Colored School in Harlan County, Ky.
- "My voice is squeaky, that's what I thought a (writer's) 'voice' was," said Michelle Singletary of *The Washington Post*, a business writer who writes the "Color of Money" column for the business pages. Since the column began in March, Singletary has received 300 e-mails, 100 letters and broad based interest.
- "Our community needs good, accurate storytelling," said *Washington Post* metro columnist Courtland Milloy. For a recent piece on several women who chased a bank robber on a bus, Milloy went out and took the picture of the women for his column.
- What's the difference between a columnist and a black columnist? said Elmer Smith of the *Philadelphia Daily News*: "Nobody will every call up Jimmy Breslin and say, 'You're not a real white man.'"

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Trotter report

Continued from front page

said Betty Winston Baye, '80, is a story of a dysfunctional family. This black and white thing is a fight in the family. As for the affirmative action conflict, the Louisville *Courier-Journal* columnist said the quiet beneficiaries of affirmative action are white women.

Based on what you've written and said, can Clinton do anything right? asked Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree. He was charged with quizzing and provoking the panel.

"We are critiquing President Clinton," said Payne, because we have a chance to influence the policy," unlike previous administrations when black opinion writers did not have opportunities to sit down with a U.S. president.

Vernon Jarrett, retired Chicago *Sun-Times* and *Tribune* columnist, said the tone only seemed harsh

because "Black America walks a tightrope between disaster on one side and near disaster on the other."

Each panelist was asked to tell a single issue or theme that concerns them that they will

write about:

Education and low expectations for black children (Payne); racism ravishing the black psyche (Sheryl McCarthy, *Newsday*); wealth disparity by race (Derrick Jackson, *Boston Globe*); Children, specifically 90 percent of black children tried as adults in her region (Baye); need for blacks to stop pointing the finger (Jarrett); voting rights taken from District of Columbia residents (Adrienne Washington, *Washington Times*); public education failures (Norman Lockman, Wilmington, Del. *News Journal*); too much reporting on pathology (Loretta Green, San Jose *Mercury News*) and children, who are getting sucker punched by society (Diuguid).

Overall about 30 columnists attended the three-day session. Trotter participants were addressed by William Julius Wilson, Harvard professor of sociology and Afro-American studies, before the Arco Forum and the author of *The Truly Disadvantaged* introduced the panel.

Wilson urged the writers help bridge the racial divide in America by forging "a new public rhetoric" that affects not only the poor but the working class.

Internally, the writers talked about improving their writing "voices" and sharpening rhythm as cadence.

There was a spell of choir talk. Do black columnists preach too much to the choir, McCarthy wondered, when they should be reaching out to pull people up the choir?

You have to keep preaching to the choir, countered Jarrett, because there are people (enemies) trying to confuse your choir.

Sometimes the choir needs voice lessons, chimed Diuguid.

Derrick Jackson suggested finding new ways to get the choir energized as opposed to being discouraged by editors from writing about race.

William Monroe Trotter was editor of the *Boston Guardian* early this century.

He clashed with Booker T. Washington on economic and political strategy for blacks.

Trotter got into a shouting match with President Woodrow Wilson in 1914 in a climate of Jim Crow laws, lynchings and the release of the film *Birth of a Nation*.

Trotter shocked and angered many people. He was booted from the White House.

Eight decades later writers who honor his passion and principle get invited to the White House to test ideas.

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Phyl Garland, teacher, honored

Columbia J-school professor an arts critic, author and child of historic black press

By **E.R. Shipp**

As the New York editor of *Ebony* magazine, Phyl Garland found herself on the "A" list for cocktail parties, society luncheons, music industry parties, Broadway opening nights and new acts of the caliber of Diana Ross' solo debut at the Waldorf's Empire Room.

But something was missing. "I had an empty feeling," she recently recalled.

When she accepted an invitation to give a speech at the dedication of a library named for Sojourner Truth at the State University of New York at New Paltz, little did she know that it would lead to an offer to join the school's black studies program.

"That was about the last thing I ever thought I wanted to do," she said with that trademark laugh. "But Mr. Johnson called me at home one morning with the wrong tone of voice."

Her famously penurious boss, John H. Johnson, granted her a leave of absence.

"Once I started teaching," she said, "I never had that empty feeling again."

Hundreds of people privileged to call her teacher – at New Paltz from 1971 to 1973 and at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism since 1973 – are grateful that her *Ebony* leave of absence never ended, but, more importantly, that Phyl found her calling in pedagogy.

Jill Nelson, the author of *Volunteer Slavery* and a new book, *Straight, No Chaser*, remembers Phyl as "welcoming" in a Columbia environment that was part crusty old editors of "Front Page" vintage and part Camp LeJeune boot camp with John Wayne as drill instructor.

"I always felt that she wanted me and everyone else to succeed," Nelson said, "but that didn't mean she was easy. She wasn't."

Betty Baye, a columnist and editorial writer at *The Courier Journal* in Louisville, Ky., came to Columbia as a civil rights foot soldier and a secretary who'd earned an undergraduate degree after attending college for years.

Phyl Garland is receiving the 1997 Luther P. Jackson Award for journalism education excellence at the 11th Annual NY Association of Black Journalists Scholarship and Awards Dinner. It is Friday, Dec. 5 at the Sheraton New York. Others being honored are photojournalist and filmmaker Gordon Parks, John Johnson, former NYC TV newsman, and the late Betty Shabazz. NYABJ gives scholarships in honor of two alumni, Stephen Gayle, '72, and Sylvia Wilson, '85.

"Phyl was one of the first persons to make me feel like a journalist," Baye said. "She treated me like she took what I said seriously, like she knew that I could do this work, and I'm grateful to her for that – her patience and her kindness – but more than that: the respect she had for us as journalism students."

Adds Addie Rimmer, recently named a deputy managing editor at the *Detroit Free Press*: "In the midst of such a stressful environment, she was calm and calming."

That Phyllis T. Garland became a college professor may have been fortuitous, but that she became a journalist was perhaps a foregone conclusion.

"My mother was a journalist and my father was a photographer. What other career could I have possibly chosen?" she said, chuckling. Her mother, Hazel, rose from stringer to editor in chief of the *Pittsburgh Courier* chain.

"She was the major influence in my life, and she deserves any bit of credit she can get because she had to do it the hard way."

Phyl's father, Percy, had intended to study medicine at Northwestern University, but he couldn't scrape together enough money.

Continued on back page

Future of jazz is bright, provided talent pursues new opportunities

Saxophonist "Big Nick" Nicholas died this fall. National Public Radio did a segment on the jazz man in mid-November. Big Nick produced a unique, robust tone from the baritone

WAYNE

sax. He was admired and respected by his peers but not widely known in jazz audiences, let alone the wider public.

DAWKINS
Commentary

But Nicholas was being singled out on the radio.

His lasting contribution to jazz, said the NPR report, was convincing jazz legends to make many show tunes part of the jazz canon.

So when John Coltrane transforms "My Favorite Things" from syrupy show tune to hypnotic hymn, remember the man who edged him on at jam sessions in Harlem in the 1950s.

The jazz canon. So, that's why this popular but hard to define art is taken so seriously by many people.

Last October in Cambridge, Mass. the Trotter Group columnists invited three musicians to talk about the future of jazz. They were bassist Christian McBride, saxophonist Joshua Redman and drummer Brian Blades.

The trio is deep. One of their signature tunes is "the Movement Revisited," written by McBride and so named he said "because people like Malcolm (X) stuck their neck out to get us to the next level. It was a '60s vibe."

Nevertheless the artists have had to contend with form trying to dominate substance.

Example, they are uneasy being defined as examples of "the young lions," 20-something or 30ish musicians who came of age in the '80s and '90s and reengineer great

music of the '50s and '60s.

"It's pop, it's the new thing," said Blades of the definition. "I'm not offended by it." But McBride said "It meant every musician under 25 got a recording contract but with underdeveloped bands." Meanwhile, established masters were ignored or remained broke.

The young men want their music to be full-bodied, not shallow. That requires time and dedication to their art. They worry about the faster spinning pace of the late '90s that rewards instant gratification over reflection.

"There's an immediacy that is almost a hindrance," said Blades, apparently referring to the proliferation of video, computers and other gadgets. "A teenager can't go to a room for three hours to work out (musical) scales."

If the desire and sheer time to experiment, refine and synthesize is lost in youth, will there be a next generation of great jazz artists?

If the answer is "not likely," that's a shame because there is work. The venues are not necessarily dark, cramped, smoke-filled cellars.

"The fine arts scene is opening up for work rather than the clubs," said Redman. The musicians' ticket is the "soft" sold to patrons of museum and symphony halls. The musicians can charge greater fees than what is being sold and make a decent living.

It's a different age. The musicians said they don't carry the baggage of alcohol and drug abuse that shadowed

Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker and others and at times denied them work. Blades said compared to previous generations, "we're rice cakes and coffee."

S.F. legend, 90

SAN FRANCISCO — Thomas Fleming was honored Nov. 29 on his 90th birthday for being a living journalism legend.

He took a train from New York to California as a boy and grew up in California during the 1920s, when he was one of 65 or 70 African Americans living in Chico, out of a population of about 10,000.

It was while writing for the Chico High School newspaper that he developed the ambition to become a journalist.

In 1944 he became founding editor of the *Sun-Reporter* in San Francisco. He continues to write several articles for the paper each week, said assistant Max Millard.

Fleming is the city's oldest working journalist, and has some 7 million words in print over the past 53 years. "Reflections on Black History," essays by Fleming are being posted on the Internet weekly. To see it send a message to Max Millard at sunreport@aol.com.

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People

James McBride, '80, turned up on the Barnes and Noble website to do a chat with readers about his best-seller *The Color of Water*. He has a novel in the works. McBride is to do an author appearance in Louisville, Dec. 7. . . **Esther Iverem, '83**, of *The Washington Post*, wrote about Christie's decision to withdraw 19th-century slavery documents from auction after protests (Nov. 12). The items instead are to be donated to a museum or historical society. . . **Melanie Eversley, '88**, of *The Detroit Free Press* Washington bureau wrote about prisons for profit last month. . . **Addie Rimmer, '78**, joined the Detroit Free Press Nov. 10 as deputy managing editor/news. She was editor of the *Daily Camera* in Boulder, Colo. and before that was at the Long Beach, Calif. *Press-Telegram*. . . **Suzanne Malveaux, '91**, of NBC News traveled with First Lady Hillary Clinton to Russia last month and reported on her visits with womens organizations.

- Let us know what you are doing and when you move. Send items and photos.

**Black Alumni Network
Newsletter**

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Phyl Garland honored

Continued from front page

When his daughter chose that school years later, she said, "I went to my father."

The distance between the *Courier* newsroom that had nurtured Hazel and embraced Phyl and the Evanston, Ill., campus where Phyl began her undergraduate education was much more than could be measured in miles.

Northwestern had only recently bowed to the demands of Edwin Jourdain - W.E.B. Dubois' lawyer, a founder of the Niagara Movement and Evanston's first black alderman - and allowed black students, including his daughter, to live on campus.

Phyl's main interests were music ("terrible pianist . . . a wonderful cellist") and drama ("I acted in way, way off Broadway productions - so way off they were in Pittsburgh."). But she was

practical and earned her bachelor's degree in journalism even though, as she says, "I wanted to be a writer with a capital 'W' instead of a journalist with a small 'j.'"

After graduation from Northwestern in 1957, she found herself back at the nationally distributed *Courier*, where she considered herself

"the last revolutionary."

"I was going to save the world all by myself with nothing but my typewriter," she said. So she was a bit stunned when John Johnson of *Ebony* magazine offered her a job in 1965 - especially since she had just written a scathing piece on the "superficial bourgeois values of *Ebony*" for the *Courier*.

"I think he hired me just to shut me up," she said.

For *Ebony*, she "met and wrote about many major figures in one of the most eventful periods of our history," said Garland.

One memorable 1966 trip took her to Ruleville, Miss., where Fannie Lou Hamer told Phyl of her struggle. "I couldn't control myself," Phyl recalled. "Tears were streaming down my face and they were streaming down her face, too. It was that heavy. You couldn't imagine people surviving that oppression and harassment and torture."

In addition to chronicling social issues, Phyl established a name for herself in the realm of cultural reporting with a special emphasis on music. In 1969 she published her first book, *The Sound of Soul*.

All of this was prologue to Phyl's teaching career at Columbia University, where she became the second black

faculty member - Luther P. Jackson preceded her by five years - and, in 1981, the first woman of any race to be granted tenure there. Her area of concentration has always involved cultural affairs. For three years, she administered the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia.

As an *Ebony* contributor through 1990, she helped introduce Wynton Marsalis to the world in a 1983 article. She still writes for *Stereo Review*.

Phyl recently celebrated her 62d birthday, but don't use that "r" word around her. She is not ready to retire.

"I don't believe I'm that old, but my birth certificate tells me I am." She thrives because so many of her students and former students do.

Phyl claims to be "decluttering" her Greenwich Village apartment, which contains, among other things, some 10,000 record albums. She has recently completed an autobiographical novel, *A Stranger Everywhere*, and she vows that, through this book and another she has in her head, she is going to be recognized as a Writer with a capital "w."

In the meantime, she'll be known as a Teacher with a capital "t."
E. R. Shipp is an assistant professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

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